



LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

# 75 YEARS

OF

# GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

*Through the Rose Parade*

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# Solidarity

by REV. DR. MICHAEL ZEIGLER,  
Speaker of *The Lutheran Hour*®



If you asked me to explain the meaning of the word, “solidarity,” I’d show you a clip from the 1991 film, *Backdraft*.

A backdraft is one of the most dangerous events a firefighter can face. It’s an explosive blast that happens after a fire has been hiding in a confined space and burns up its oxygen, making the flames die down, but still hot enough to be dangerous. The fire isn’t visible, but it’s still there, waiting for an opportune time to reignite.

The movie tells the story of a team of firefighters in Chicago. The scene that I referenced sets up like this: The team has responded to a four-alarm fire in an old factory and is searching for victims trapped on an upper level. Suddenly, the floorboards cave in as the flame-eaten joists below them give way. The floor opens its jaws, and one of the firemen falls into the maw of the fire-breathing beast.

His partner standing nearby throws himself onto the floor and reaches through the smoking, splintered teeth to grab his comrade’s hand. But the weight of the dangling man nearly pulls him down. More firefighters rush to their aid, clasp hands and pulling with all their might as the fiery beast growls to engulf them. As they sweat and strain together, the dangling man feels his hand slipping. He knows it’s all over. “I’m goin’!” he says to his partner, who answers him, “You go. We go.”

That is solidarity. It’s the alignment of fates, hopes, and futures. It’s unity, harmony, cohesion. It’s the opposite of divisiveness, discord, and self-interest. Solidarity says, “You go. We go.” Solidarity is how Christians understand their relationship to Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus, the Son of God, went where we had gone so that we might go where He goes.

The Gospel, the Good News announced in the

New Testament, the Good News we announce every week through **The Lutheran Hour**, is that God’s Son was born a human among the people of Israel, that He was given the Name Jesus and the title, Christ, that He was crucified, buried, raised from the dead, and that He will return visibly one day to set the world right, so that we would have solidarity with Him.

For Christians, faith in Jesus is not an accessory, but solidarity. It’s not fire insurance, but God’s gift that binds us to Jesus. We become His partners, His comrades, His people. He becomes our Captain. And we trust Him because He went where we went, so that His story could become our story. Where He goes, we go.

The apostle Paul, a first-generation messenger and representative of Jesus, explained how this was the plan all along—that God created humanity for solidarity with Him. God created us for life with Him, but we rebelled against God, and the backdraft of

our rebellion brought death and disaster on the world. But because of Jesus, our rebellion has not ruined God’s plan. In fact, our sin has indirectly proved the power of God’s love and grace all the more. Even after we became God’s enemies, even after we would become the people who would murder God’s beloved Son, even then He would seek forgiveness and reconciliation and solidarity with us.

Jesus came in solidarity with us by throwing Himself into sin’s jaws. And it killed Him, consumed Him, swallowed Him whole, just like it’ll do to us one day. But then God turned this greatest evil into the highest good. God raised Jesus from the dead. And by faith in Him, by Baptism in His Name, God unites us with Christ. Where He has gone, we follow. ♦

*Solidarity is how Christians understand their relationship to Jesus Christ.*



thank you

*Lourdes has a newborn baby who was hospitalized. While visiting the hospital one day, she noticed a stand that LHM-Paraguay had set up for a women’s outreach program. “I feel lonely at the hospital,” says Lourdes. “The work you do to share reading material that strengthens my faith is appreciated, because I need a lot of support. I am grateful for your encouragement, the booklets, and the Bible I received to make me feel stronger.”*

Your generosity shares Christ’s love with people like Lourdes. Visit **LHM.ORG/GIVE** or send a gift in the enclosed envelope today.

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Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church

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# 75 YEARS OF GOSPEL PROCLAMATION Through the Rose Parade



by CHAD FIX

**D**uring the 2026 Rose Parade presented by Honda on New Year’s Day, Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) marked a milestone of faith, service, and witness on a worldwide stage. Carrying a message of hope, unity, and Christ’s redeeming love to millions around the globe, LHM’s float celebrated 75 years of Gospel proclamation through the ministry’s annual presence in the Rose Parade.

For three-quarters of a century, this beloved tradition has offered a vibrant and public witness to the Good News—making LHM’s float one of the parade’s most enduring expressions of Christian faith.



*... every person has a place and a purpose in sharing Christ’s love, and together we can bring that hope to the world.*



## A FLOAT ROOTED IN FAITH

Honoring the 2026 Tournament of Roses theme, “The Magic in Teamwork,” this year’s LHM anniversary entry was titled “Bringing Christ to the Nations®.” Its design featured a joyful “Team Jesus” blimp soaring over the world, while Jesus stepped forth from the church to celebrate with 12 modern-day disciples beneath the message “All Welcome.” The float honored the diverse vocations through which God builds His church, represented by riders such as a teacher, missionary, pastor, and others who live out Christ’s call every day.

The float’s message was simple yet profound: every person has a place and a purpose in sharing Christ’s love, and together we can bring that hope to the world.

As the only Christian float in the parade,

LHM’s entry continues its long-standing mission of offering a Gospel witness to viewers—both those lining the parade route in Pasadena, California, and the tens of millions watching via television and livestream around the world.

“Reaching 75 years in the Rose Parade is more than a milestone; it’s a celebration of the people who have carried this ministry’s mission forward to communities around the world,” says Kurt Buchholz, Global CEO of Lutheran Hour Ministries. “Every flower placed, every volunteer who serves, and every viewer who sees our message is part of a legacy of hope that spans generations. We are honored to continue sharing Christ’s love in such a joyful and public way and deeply grateful to the thousands who make this tradition possible each year.”

*see next page*





Laercio Knaak (LHM-Paraguay) & Lori Parker



Alicia & Kaitlyn Berry



Shirley Walczak



Lynae & Doug Reith

## A POWERFUL MESSAGE FOR ALL

The Lutheran Hour Ministries float is not solely intended for those who know Jesus. It is also a welcomed sight each year for those who have not yet experienced the love of Jesus or have been away from including Jesus in their life.

“I’m sure the kids loved this one and if we can get to the kids, maybe they’ll bring their parents,” shared a respondent to LHM’s Facebook page. “To me the float is meant to reach out to those who don’t know the Lord.”

Lori Parker, who retired at the end of January following a 40-plus-year career with LHM,

*“It was an incredible experience that words cannot adequately describe.”*

shared her testimonial as one of the 12 riders on this year’s float. “As you make the turn from Orange Grove Boulevard onto Colorado Boulevard, it’s amazing to see the people start cheering—and cheering for Jesus.

They see Jesus and their faces light up. It was so incredible to experience this in person because it’s not something you can really see during the televised parade coverage. It just makes you feel so good when you hear people along the parade route screaming out, ‘We love You, Jesus!’ while

putting their hands up in the shape of hearts, giving their thumbs up, and waving. It made my heart sing that people do love Jesus and that the float brings such a powerful and needed message to the world. It was an incredible experience that words cannot adequately describe.”

## THOUSANDS OF VOLUNTEERS BRING THE MESSAGE TO LIFE

Each year, the LHM float is lovingly decorated by the Petal Pushers®, a dedicated volunteer community more than 4,000 members strong. During the week between Christmas and New Year’s, volunteers from across the country apply thousands of roses, lilies, carnations, mums, seeds, coffee beans, and other natural materials to bring every float detail to life.

Sisters Alicia and Kaitlyn Berry from Yorba Linda, California, started “petal pushing” through their Girl Scout troop in 1996. Their younger sisters followed in line once they were old enough to volunteer. A family tradition, their parents are Petal Pushers, too, and their grandparents were as well. “We appreciate that there is a religious float represented in the parade to share the love of Jesus widely and always enjoy having a chance to work on it.”

*“This is a horticulturalist’s dream!”*

“I have always watched the parade, so coming to Pasadena to participate in the unique experience of decorating floats has long been a ‘bucket list’ item for me since it aligns with my training, schooling, and interests,” says Shirley Walczak from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. “This is a horticulturalist’s dream! Being behind the scenes and up close to the floats offered a unique perspective of how everything fits together that you really cannot see when watching the parade on television.”

“It was exciting to see how every volunteer has a role to play as just one small piece in completing the whole puzzle,” says Doug Reith from Wichita, Kansas, who volunteered alongside his wife, Lynae.

“I worked on the televised side of the LHM float mumming (applying natural materials to the structure) while sitting high up on scaffolding,” says Carolyn Harper from Warner Robins, Georgia. Harper joined her parents and other family members with a Luther Tours group this year. “It was so cool to watch the parade and see the exact parts of my handiwork going down the street.”


*“It was exciting to see how every volunteer has a role to play as just one small piece in completing the whole puzzle.”*


## TV, DIGITAL & SOCIAL IMPACT


Hundreds of shares extending reach far beyond the parade route

(12.27.25 - 01.04.26)

### WHY THE FLOAT MATTERS

  
15 million people viewed the parade on television

  
More than 1.1 Million views of LHM social content

  
118,000+ Facebook Live views on parade day alone

More than 40k interactions and more than 1,000 new followers during parade week

  
More than 435,000 unique visitors to our social pages



Carolyn Harper



Barbara Britton



Erin Bierman & Jen Piefer



Gina Wright & Tony DePaoli

## THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

This large-scale servant event extends well beyond LHM’s own entry. Petal Pushers volunteers assist with decorating up to seven additional floats, making the entire week a unique ministry opportunity and one of the largest ongoing volunteer service projects in the nation.

“Working on the float is more than decorating,” says Dick Gast, chair of the LHM Float Committee. “It’s a chance for people from all over the country—believers and nonbelievers alike—to serve together, make new friends, and experience the joy and meaning behind this tradition. The relationships built here are as impactful as the parade itself.”

“I love establishing friendships with the other volunteers each year and then staying in contact with them,” says Barbara Britton from Stockton, California. “Tackling the challenges of the intricate artistic elements involved in decorating these floats

**“The relationships built here are as impactful as the parade itself.”**

is extremely rewarding. I was filled with pride and excitement watching the City of Hope float in the parade and seeing the parts that my son and I helped create.”

Erin Bierman and Jen Piefer are part of the Saddleback chapter of the National Charity League, a group of mothers and their daughters aged 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade who do volunteer projects. Many of their typical volunteer efforts involve individual projects, so they enjoy serving as Petal Pushers for the opportunity to work together and with others. “It’s fun to be part of something so big and to interact with people from all across the country,” says Bierman.

“We wanted to try something new and since I was an art teacher we thought this would be a fun experience to do something affiliated with our church,” says Gina Wright, who was joined by her brother, Tony DePaoli, and other members from St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Holtville, California. “Everyone here has been so friendly, and I have been amazed by the camaraderie, joy, and sense of teamwork shared by all the volunteers from across the country who are so happy to be part of this process. This experience made the parade more meaningful for us knowing that we played a small role in the tremendously detailed work of putting a float together.”

**“It’s fun to be part of something so big and to interact with people from all across the country.”**

## A DISTRICT PROJECT WITH A WORLDWIDE IMPACT

The Rose Parade provides a powerful platform to share Christ’s love with a global audience. This unique opportunity remains a driving force behind the float being a self-funded project of the LHM Float Committee and the Southern California District of the Lutheran Laymen’s League (LLL). While the float carries LHM’s name, it is not included in LHM’s operating budget.

“We are grateful to the Southern California District LLL, the LHM Float Committee, and the Petal Pushers for carrying on a mission to provide a Gospel witness to viewers everywhere, from the five-and-a-half-mile parade route in Pasadena to televisions, computers, and phones around the world,” says Nicole Heerlein, LHM’s associate director of external relations. “We are indebted to Dick and Lynn Gast and their daughters for their continued vision, tireless efforts, boundless energy, and detailed coordination of thousands of Petal Pusher volunteers as this is their 35th year spearheading the Lutheran Hour Ministries float.”

More information about the LHM float and the Petal Pushers volunteer ministry can be found at [lhm.org/petalpushers](http://lhm.org/petalpushers). ♦

*Chad Fix oversees the corporate communications of Lutheran Hour Ministries.*

## WEBSITE ENGAGEMENT



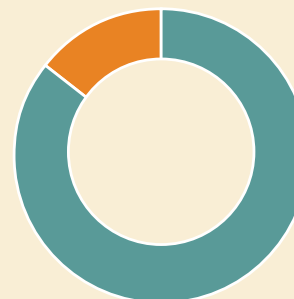
**8,500**  
visitors  
on  
January 1, 2026

**Nearly double**  
**parade day**  
**traffic**  
compared to 2025  
(2025: 4,700 visitors)



Sustained growth in  
**active and**  
**new users**  
during parade week

## BY FOLLOWERS VS. NON-FOLLOWERS



**85.8%**  
● Non-followers

**14.2%**  
● Followers

Congregation  
Spotlight:  
**How YOU  
Can Join  
LHM's  
Mission**

by MEGAN MCDANIEL



— Photo from Immanuel Lutheran Church

<b>Congregation name:</b>	<b>Congregation size:</b>
Immanuel Lutheran Church	424 baptized members
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Contacts:</b>
Festus, Missouri	Rev. Kyle Castens & Carrie Malusky

**How does your congregation support LHM?**

Immanuel supports Lutheran Hour Ministries by regularly sharing their resources with both members and the wider community. We promote **Project Connect** booklets, Bible studies, devotions, and digital tools that encourage faith growth and meaningful conversations. LHM's **Daily Devotions** are frequently shared on Facebook to extend their reach, and members are encouraged to listen to LHM's radio broadcast and podcasts throughout the week. Through these efforts, our congregation actively partners with LHM's mission to share the Gospel with people everywhere.

**What was the motivation behind supporting LHM?**

Our support for LHM grows out of a long history and deep personal connection. Many members remember listening to **The Lutheran Hour** as children—some as far back as the 1930s—gathering around the radio to hear Dr. Walter A. Maier and later Dr. Oswald Hoffmann proclaim Christ with clarity and conviction. These early experiences fostered lasting trust in LHM's biblically grounded teaching and strong evangelistic witness. Supporting LHM today is a natural continuation of that appreciation and gratitude.

**What has been your members' feedback? What do your members like about LHM?**

Feedback from Immanuel's members is consistently positive. Many treasure the weekly broadcast from **The Lutheran Hour**, noting that each broadcast brings new insight. Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler's clear distinction of Law and Gospel, along with the thoughtful guests featured on the program, are frequently praised. Members also value LHM's Daily Devotions, often sharing them online, and appreciate LHM's topical booklets as practical tools for Christian living. Personal encounters with LHM speakers, including memorable visits from Dr. Hoffmann and Dr. Zeigler, remain cherished experiences. Across generations, our congregation is grateful for LHM's faithful proclamation of the Gospel and the resources that strengthen faith and support outreach.

If your congregation would like to learn more about how you can support LHM's mission, contact Robin Forsythe at **314-317-4152** or **robin.forsythe@lhm.org**. If you would like to make a gift of support, visit **lhm.org/give**. ♦

Megan McDaniel reports on the impact of LHM's ministry work around the world.



**Encouraging Students to Share Life, Faith, and Jesus with Friends** by MEGAN MCDANIEL

**S**piritual Conversations: *Sharing Life, Faith, and Jesus with Friends* is a seven-lesson course designed for teachers and youth leaders to help high school-aged students recognize and respond to opportunities to have spiritual conversations.

Combining insights from Barna Group research and LHM's commitment to equipping people to share the Gospel, this course includes interactive group activities, videos, data to consider, opportunities for discussions on Scripture and faith-sharing conversations, and more.

Daniel Kreienkamp is a theology teacher at Lutheran High School in St. Charles, Missouri, and teaches apologetics and world religions. He had known an LHM staff member for a while, but after hearing more about LHM's *Spiritual Conversations: Sharing Life, Faith, and Jesus with Friends* program at conferences, he decided to integrate it into his lessons.

"As we are learning apologetics and about other religions, we want to be able to have spiritual conversations and take the time to really walk the students through the basics of how to have a conversation, how to ask great questions, and how to be a great listener," says Kreienkamp. "The program laid a great foundation for us to build on for the rest of the semester."

Kreienkamp believes that the best way to share the Gospel is through relationships. "People typically do not

get 'argued' into believing," he says. "In life, we have interviews with people from other religions and do visits to holy places where we interact with people of different faiths, so it's important to be able to have a posture of curiosity and understanding when interacting with non-Christians."

Students in Kreienkamp's class use a digital program that allows them to work on lessons collaboratively. The LHM course enhanced this model since some of the curriculum is presented by high school students. "The high school students in the videos are authentic, real, and funny,"

says Kreienkamp. "The scenarios they presented were exactly what you'd expect from high school students. My students were able to relate to it and have real conversations. A lot of our conversations have humor, and we don't need to be serious about everything; having a little levity in our conversations is a great model for us."

"Our students also gained a respect for listening through the program. The first field trip that we went on was to the Jewish synagogue, and we heard from Jewish students. Our students had the opportunity to listen, but also be able to ask questions and really take to heart what they were hearing. I could see that even though it wasn't a one-on-one conversation, they really listened and wanted to understand what other people believe."

Visit **lhm.org/schs** to find out more and register for *Spiritual Conversations: Sharing Life, Faith, and Jesus with Friends*. ♦

**"Our students had the opportunity to listen, but also be able to ask questions and really take to heart what they were hearing."**



# Partners in the Gospel

by DR. KURT SENSKE, Chairman, Int'l LLL Board of Directors



Every gift tells a story. Behind every check written to Lutheran Hour Ministries or online donation made is a heart that says, “I believe in what God is doing here.” As we reflect on the generosity of those who support this ministry, I am reminded that giving is never just a transaction—it’s a partnership. It’s a shared commitment to the Gospel mission that binds us together as co-laborers in Christ.

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, he thanked them for their “partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now.” Paul saw their financial and prayer support as an active participation in God’s work. They were not bystanders funding someone else’s ministry; they were partners, sharing in both the joy of service and the fruit of the harvest. That same spirit defines the relationship between you—our faithful supporters—and Lutheran Hour Ministries today.

Every donation, large or small, allows the message of Christ to reach further than any one of us could go alone. Your generosity becomes a bridge between vision and action, between

**Partnership in the Gospel is not simply about what ministries receive; it’s about what we all become—a community bound by a shared mission and a shared Savior.**

calling and capacity. Through your support, we can proclaim hope, equip staff and volunteer leaders, and nurture faith in countless lives. You make ministry possible.

But even more importantly, giving changes us. When we invest our resources in God’s kingdom, our hearts follow. We move from being consumers of ministry to being contributors to God’s ongoing story. Partnership in the Gospel is not simply about what ministries receive; it’s about what we all become—a community bound by a shared mission and a shared Savior.

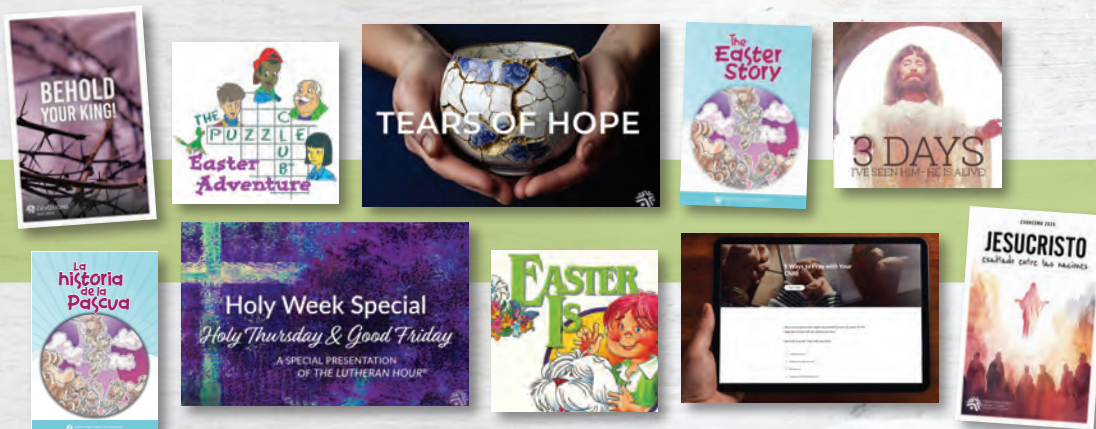
As LHM’s board chair, I have the privilege of seeing firsthand how your generosity fuels transformation. I’ve seen volunteers empowered to serve, staff equipped to lead, and individuals whose lives were restored through

the Holy Spirit because someone decided to give. I’ve also seen how this ministry strives to steward those gifts with integrity, prayer, and accountability. We do not take your trust lightly. We understand that every dollar represents both sacrifice and faith—a tangible expression of partnership.

Looking ahead, we stand at a moment of great opportunity. The needs around us are immense, but so is God’s faithfulness. The same Lord who multiplied the loaves and fish is still at work multiplying the impact of our shared efforts today. Together, we can continue to bring light into darkness, love into despair, and hope into places that need it most.

So, thank you—for giving, for praying, and for standing with us. Whether you’ve been an LHM family member for decades or are new to our story, know that your involvement matters deeply. You are more than donors—you are partners in the Gospel, part of the living testimony of what God is doing through this ministry. May God bless you richly for your faithfulness. ♦

## Celebrate the reason for the season with Easter resources from LHM!



Check out our full suite of Bible-based tools designed to help guide you throughout the Lenten season.

 [LHM.ORG/EASTER](http://LHM.ORG/EASTER)

## Sharing Christ's Love Through Cricket

by CHAD FIX



For decades, LHM has shared Christ's love with the world by identifying and equipping local laypeople to develop ministry programs contextual to the culture in which they serve. Since staff members understand local needs, LHM can create customized programming and resources that resonate with their audience.

In recognition of cricket's growing popularity among youth in India, staff from LHM's satellite ministry in Mumbai organized a cricket tournament to capture the interest of local young people. The event provided a platform for church members to showcase their passion for the sport while promoting fellowship and unity through healthy competition, all while strengthening their partnership and collaboration with LHM in sharing the Gospel message to their communities.

The day started with breakfast followed by a prayer and short sermon delivered by a local pastor who serves as an LHM volunteer. Throughout the event, LHM staff and volunteers interacted with the participants, shared information about their ministry, and distributed booklets and other Christ-centered resources.

A total of 80 players on eight teams participated and approximately 100 spectators attended. In addition, the matches were streamed live on the ministry's YouTube channel to an audience of approximately 700 viewers to extend the tournament's impact beyond the venue.

"The tournament was a resounding success in not only fostering unity and sportsmanship, but strengthening spiritual bonds among youth," says Bryan Tay, LHM's president of Asia Ministries who attended the event to present the trophy to the winning team. ♦

## Your Choice Dollars Help Share CHRIST'S HOPE WORLDWIDE

Through Lutheran Hour Ministries, the Gospel is reaching people across cultures, languages, and continents to bring hope, comfort, and faith in Jesus Christ.



If you are an eligible Thrivent member who still has 2025 Choice Dollars remaining, directing them to LHM before March 31, 2026, helps ensure that more people will hear the life-changing message of the Gospel.

Don't Delay! Visit  [LHM.ORG/CHOICE](https://lhm.org/choice) today!



## Diverse Needs: There's a Project Connect Booklet for That!

by PAUL SCHREIBER

As LHM continues its ongoing process of reviewing booklets in the **Project Connect** library, it's also adding new ones and updating existing titles.

Our latest booklet is Volume 2 of *35 Character-Building Prayers for My Grandchild*. Whereas Volume 1 considered character traits ranging from A to H, Volume 2 runs from I to Z. Readers will find prayers on important personal attributes like *optimism, purpose, resilience, self-control*, and more for young ones to be mindful of and express in their day-to-day interactions and faith walk. Who wouldn't want their grandchildren to be more *independent* and *responsible* as they face life's challenges? How important and enriching it is—for oneself and others—to be *joyful* and *loving* and *kind* in this world.



Award-winning author Dr. Mary Manz Simon once again displays her insight and personal experience (three children, five grandchildren) in the heartfelt words of this handy booklet. Easy to read and right on point, she petitions God for things we might not think to ask, as in this prayer on *persevering*: "May my grandchild build stamina through repeated attempts and personal effort. When he/she feels a task is too difficult or appears endless, encourage positive self-talk and focused attention." A Scripture verse heads each prayer with another to build understanding. Space is provided for notes, too. An audio version, read by the author, is also available.

Addressing breast cancer is the revised and updated booklet, *Hope and Healing: Surviving Breast Cancer*. It's by Dr. Foluso Bisi Ademuyiwa, a board-certified medical oncologist who's published more than 85 research articles on breast cancer and its treatment. With expertise and empathy, she travels with the reader through the feelings and emotions of a cancer diagnosis. Throughout this journey she acknowledges God's sovereignty over this situation and His power to bring peace and comfort to patients and family.

What God offers us is greater than our cancer, she says. "The wonderful news for every one of us is this: [Jesus said,] 'I am with you always [remaining with you perpetually—regardless of circumstance, and on every occasion], even to the end of the age'" (Matthew 28:20b, AMP).

These and many other booklets are available at [lhm.org/projectconnect](https://lhm.org/projectconnect), where you can order printed copies, download PDF versions, and listen to many booklets as an MP3 audio file. There you will also find booklets in Spanish along with instructive kids' booklets full of rhymes and engaging illustrations. ♦

Paul Schreiber reports on the impact of LHM's ministry work in the United States.

# NURTURING YOUR FAITH: *Journey Through*

## SESSION ONE *Journey Through Anxiety*



### PART I: INTRODUCTION

Your heart races. Your palms sweat. Your mind spins with worst-case scenarios. Sound familiar?

Most of us know anxiety all too well. It shows up uninvited—before a difficult conversation, during sleepless nights, in the pit of your stomach when uncertainty looms. Like a warning light on your car’s dashboard, anxiety alerts you that something needs attention. But what happens when that light never turns off? What happens when you can’t tell the difference between genuine danger and false alarms?

The cost of unaddressed anxiety is steep. Physical disease. Lost confidence. A gnawing sense that you’ve betrayed yourself. Emotional numbness that walls you off from the very connections you crave. Left unchecked, anxiety doesn’t just whisper warnings—it starts writing the script of your life.

But here’s the good news: anxiety doesn’t have to have the final word.

This study is an invitation to journey through the landscape of anxiety—not to deny it or minimize it, but to understand it and move through it with courage and faith. Because here’s the truth that changes everything: you are not alone in your anxiety. The God who formed you, who knows every anxious thought before you think it, walks with you through every fearful moment. He doesn’t condemn you for your fear—He comes close, asks, “Where are you?” and covers you with His perfect love.



REFLECT

*When have you experienced anxiety acting like a warning light in your life? How did you respond to it?*

### PART II: IN THE BEGINNING

Read Genesis 3:7-10.

In the beginning, humanity was made to reflect God’s image. Specifically, we are made to relate and create. Just as God experiences deep communion among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are designed to desire relational intimacy—being fully known and loved by God, by others, and by ourselves. Just as God delighted in His creation, we too delight in co-creating with God as His image-bearers.

#### *Entering the Landscape of Fear*

When Adam and Eve ate the fruit in Eden, this perfect balance splintered. Genesis 3:7-10 records the moment when fear, shame, and hiding entered our story. Let’s look closely at this pivotal passage.

Before this moment, Adam and Eve lived in complete transparency—their nakedness represented vulnerability without fear. They were fully known and fully loved. But their simple act of covering themselves reveals what fear and shame do: they drive us into hiding.

When “they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden,” their

response was radically different. Rather than running to meet Him, “the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God.” The intimacy they once enjoyed with God now felt dangerous. They questioned whether they could still be loved if truly seen.

Notice the progression: hearing led to fear, fear led to awareness of vulnerability, and vulnerability led to hiding. This same pattern plays out in our lives today. When we experience anxiety, we become acutely aware of our vulnerability and instinctively move toward hiding—from God, from others, and even from ourselves.

The relational intimacy and creative purpose we were designed for became casualties of fear. Where Adam and Eve once walked freely with God, they now covered in shame. The anxiety that entered through sin established patterns we still struggle with today. Yet God’s response—seeking them, calling out, “Where are you?”—reveals that His love pursues us even in our fear and hiding.



REFLECT

*How does it change your perspective on anxiety and fear to know that God pursues us even when we’re hiding?*

*see next page*

DOWNLOAD STUDY GUIDE AND VIDEO AT [LHM.ORG/BIBLESTUDIES](http://LHM.ORG/BIBLESTUDIES)





## PART III: THE LANDSCAPE OF FEAR

The journey through anxiety is a journey that requires us to recognize the landscape of fear.

### *The Cliffs of Anxiety*

Like standing on a cliff edge peering into an abyss, anxiety is intensely physical. Common symptoms include feeling nervous or tense; a sense of impending danger; increased heart rate and rapid breathing; sweating and trembling; fatigue; trouble concentrating; sleep difficulties; gastrointestinal problems; difficulty controlling worry; and urges to avoid anxiety triggers.

According to the American Psychiatric Association: "Fear is the emotional response to real or perceived threat, whereas anxiety is anticipation of future threat." When we encounter danger, our bodies respond automatically—we fight, freeze, flee, or tend and befriend. Fear is a biological hero in the right context. It becomes problematic when stored, generalized, and projected into the future as anxiety.

### *Fog of Perceived Threat*

When we've encountered painful situations—especially in childhood—we easily view other situations through that lens. Previous pain can limit our ability to distinguish what is truly threatening now. We must learn to discern real threats from perceived ones. When we fear being hurt again, we see reality through foggy beliefs based on old pain rather than present truth.

### *Swamp of Shame and Self-Doubt*

Where fear responds to threat and anxiety projects fear forward, shame is self-doubt extending beyond reasonable limits to permanent inadequacy. Shame says nothing we do will be enough—that something is fundamentally wrong with who we are. Shame makes facing anxiety sources harder because we fear exposure will confirm us as unloved, incompetent, and inadequate. As you seek truth, remember, you are fearfully and wonderfully made.

### *Valley of Avoidance*

Herein lies anxiety's betrayal: our bodies signal high alert, yet we're uncertain whether to trust those signals or whether we can handle reality. This intensely painful experience can lead to shutting down to avoid pain. Avoidance is so common that it's part of diagnostic criteria for anxiety disorders. Because avoidance behaviors occur instinctively and may feel like survival, it's difficult to see alternatives. Yet avoiding anxiety sources almost always worsens the problem, potentially leading to functional, relational, and spiritual impairment.



REFLECT

Which metaphor(s) resonates most with your experience of anxiety? Why?

## PART IV: FREEDOM TO FLOURISH

We need new pathways. How do we navigate the Cliffs of Anxiety differently? Are there bridges over the Swamp of Shame? Are there tunnels through the mountains so we don't retreat via the Valley of Avoidance?

Humans flourish when we walk according to how we were created. After being wounded and frustrated, we think we'll avoid pain by shutting down our desires to relate and create. However, those desires were woven into us by God as the source of our flourishing. Shutting them down is like hanging a blanket over the mirror of our souls, obstructing God's glory bestowed in us.

### *Slow Your Roll with Self-Control*

Overcoming avoidance requires self-control. To break the cycle, we must give ourselves permission to stop and accept our fear's reality without blaming others, shaming ourselves, or hiding. When we accept that suffering and fear are part of living in a fallen world, we slow anxiety long enough to catch our breath—potentially the starting point to a new way of life.

Consider practicing the S.T.O.P. approach when feeling anxious:

**S** - Slow down.

**T** - Take three deep breaths.

**O** - Observe the situation's safety, others' feelings, and your own reactions.

**P** - Proceed with curiosity and wonder!

### *Love Covers a Multitude of Sin and Shame*

Scripture tells us that God is intimately acquainted with our frail condition and does not despise us—instead, He joined us in our humanity. When we believe shame's messages, we struggle to draw near to God with confidence and retreat from other relationships. Shame prevents vulnerability and drives us into self-protection and isolation.

In Genesis, the clothing Adam and Eve made from fear and shame didn't cover their sin's disgrace. God's all-knowing love came asking, "Where are you?" Then He lovingly made garments for them, even as He would later cover mankind's sin with robes of righteousness through Jesus' atoning work on the cross.

God has made these robes of righteousness for you, perfectly suited to cover your shame and anxiety. If you don't have trusted friends asking—and with whom you can honestly answer—"Where are you?"—seek a counselor, pastor, or support group to exercise the God-given desire to relate in healthy ways.



REFLECT

How does understanding that God's love covers your shame change the way you view your struggles with anxiety?

## CONCLUSION

Anxiety points us toward what needs attention. When we push past without listening to it and to God, we often get hurt. If we shut down to avoid anxiety, we miss its message and close ourselves off to growing in our relationships with God and others. Anxiety serves as both a warning light and an invitation to spiritual growth.

When we accept that anxiety is part of earthly experience, we can then lean into God's love and power in ways that help us move through anxiety rather than being crippled by it. As we journey through our anxiety with God, we discover how to lean on God's power, love, and self-control.



REFLECT

What is one practical way you can lean into God's love and power this week when facing fear or anxiety?



Watch an interview with Dr. Rick Marrs discussing the journey through anxiety at [lhm.org/biblestudies](http://lhm.org/biblestudies)



PRAY

Heavenly Father, help us turn our worries and anxieties over to You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



connected  
through



CHRIST

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:**

For more than 100 years, Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) has been sharing the hope of Jesus Christ—and because of faithful partners like you, millions of lives around the world are being touched by the Gospel every day.

Yet the need has never been greater.

Today, more than **five billion people** have not heard the saving message of Christ. These are people from every culture and walk of life, many of whom have had little or no opportunity to hear that God loves them through Jesus. For them, hope feels distant. But together, we can change that.

LHM is uniquely positioned to reach those who have never been reached before. Through our global ministry model, we partner with **local believers**—staff and volunteers who understand their communities, speak the language, and share the Gospel with cultural sensitivity and faithfulness. Our ministry centers span **five global regions**, reaching into **more than 60 nations**, delivering Christ-centered messages that are developed locally for maximum impact and Gospel accuracy.

While the message of salvation never changes, the world around us does. That's why we continually invest in new ways to share Christ's love—through innovative media, digital outreach, and on-the-

ground relationships—so the Gospel can break through barriers and reach hearts where they are.

None of this happens without you.

Your prayers, generosity, and commitment make it possible for someone, somewhere in the world, to hear about Jesus—perhaps for the very first time. Because of your partnership, individuals are finding hope, comfort, and new life in Christ even in the most challenging circumstances.

As you explore this year's ministry impact report, we pray you will be encouraged and humbled to see what God is accomplishing through you. New mission fields opened, new programs equipping people to share the Gospel right where they are, and millions of people experiencing Christ's love for the first time. Together, we are making an eternal difference—bringing the hope of Jesus to the lost, the hurting, and the unreached.

Thank you for being part of this mission.

**Your Partner in HIS Mission,**



Kurt Buchholz,  
Global CEO, Lutheran Hour Ministries

by CHAD FIX

**2025**  
*A Year in Review*



LHM was abundantly blessed by God during the last year thanks to your generous support. Following are some key ministry metrics and an overview of activities in each of LHM's three strategic priority areas.

*see next page*



# our mission & vision

## BRINGING CHRIST TO THE NATIONS®— AND THE NATIONS TO THE CHURCH

**Every person** has the opportunity to hear the Gospel in an understandable way.

**Those seeking** are connected to a healthy Christian community where they can grow in their faith.

**Every Christian** is equipped to share the Gospel in word and deed.

**Engaged Christians** advance this common mission as a global community.

## ministry by the numbers

Numbers as of the end of Fiscal Year 2025 (May 31, 2025)

### REACH

The number of times people around the world experience the Gospel through LHM programs, services, or materials each week.

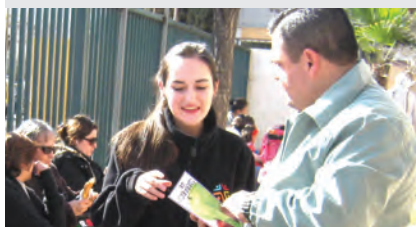
**Nearly 275 million**



### RESPONSES

The number of times people intentionally provided contact information last year for follow up in response to LHM's culturally relevant outreach efforts.

**1,950,813**



### REFERRALS

The number of times LHM referred people to local churches and Christian communities last year for spiritual growth and nurturing.

**405,814**



### EQUIPPING

The number of times individuals completed an LHM ministry activity last year that equipped them to share their faith more effectively.

**456,254**



### ENGAGED CONSTITUENTS

The number of individuals who are actively connected to LHM through its resources or the sharing of their time, talent, or treasure in support of the organizational mission.

**389,268**



## IMPACTING PEOPLE



**globally**



LHM's establishment of a multidivisional global mission rooted in localized regional leadership took an initial step forward with the hiring of Bryan Tay as the president of Asia Ministries. Based in Singapore, Tay is LHM's first regional president living outside of the United States. By creating a ministry model that shifts leadership to regional presidents who are located closer to where ministry is happening, we can ensure that our mission is tailored to the unique needs of specific areas.

Global expansion continues to develop through the efforts of LHM's existing ministry centers. Working alongside **LHM-Paraguay**, a team of three interns began ministry in **Bolivia** that is focused on children and youth, digital outreach through social media, and multimedia content creation—areas of outreach that reflect the core of LHM's work around the world. In addition, **LHM-Kenya** has started airing evangelistic radio spots in a new area—in neighboring **Tanzania**. By working with local Lutherans from Tanzania, the inspiring Gospel messages advertise LHM's popular **Bible Correspondence Courses** via radio.



A new multi-language project in partnership with SAT-7 is shining Christ's light across all of SAT-7's adult channels to reach viewers in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as several countries in Central Asia.

The programs include *Heartbeat* on SAT-7 ARABIC, *GPS* on SAT-7 PARS, and *Let's Talk About This* on SAT-7

**TÜRK**. The *Reconnecting the MENA to Hope* project uses selected topical content from LHM's **Project Connect** booklets to address the challenges of daily life in the region by offering hope in Jesus through unique satellite broadcasts, digital and social media, and direct follow up. Each channel's programming is tailored to the unique language, culture, and felt needs of its audience, and points viewers to additional resources to help them further explore the topics covered.

Bible courses are a cornerstone of our ministry in **Nicaragua**. Participants at various levels of biblical understanding are strengthening their faith and discovering their calling to serve others. Currently, structured courses are offered across 11 communities in León over a three-month period. At the end of each cycle, students who complete the course receive certificates. Each year, the team in Nicaragua reaches an average of 1,500 graduates, helping them grow in their understanding of God's Word. Many testimonies have emerged from these classes, reflecting renewed commitment, spiritual growth, and transformation through the Word of God.



In **Ghana** and **Uganda**, our staff have gained access to public schools. This allows staff and volunteers to distribute our Bible Correspondence Courses to students while also sharing practical advice on topics like relationships or the pressures of youth from a biblical perspective.

# IMPACTING PEOPLE through



## digital engagement

Around 40,000 grade school-through middle school-aged children participated in the interactive activities offered through this year's **Gospel Adventures™** program that connected them with life and kids in Kenya. Parents, teachers, and youth leaders led children and youth through a weeklong curriculum providing hands-on activities, exercises, and other exciting ways to learn how the Gospel reaches people in this intriguing African country. Participants immersed themselves in a new culture through engaging music and videos, learned fascinating facts of daily life, and reflected on the work of the Gospel in their lives and around the world.



invites visitors to download topical e-books, watch videos, and talk to our team of 50-plus volunteers. The platform has reached more than 1.8 million visitors, with 80,000 downloads and 16,000 interactions.

Digital outreach in **Laos** continues to thrive. Using Facebook and YouTube, staff eagerly share a diverse selection of Gospel-centered content that includes music, spiritual encouragement through devotional clips, and more. Within a single month, their reach exceeded 200,000 across all platforms and they measured significant engagement with their content through shares, new followers, and meaningful interactions that resulted from their posts.



Now in its 93<sup>rd</sup> broadcast season, **The Lutheran Hour®** continues to proclaim the Gospel on around 1,700 traditional radio outlets throughout North America. In addition, it is available online, as a podcast, and on platforms, such as Amazon Alexa, iHeartRadio, Spotify, and Sirius XM satellite radio.



Our “by Hispanics, for Hispanics” approach to creating content continues to resonate with a growing digital-first Hispanic audience that is hungry for ministry resources that share the hope of the Gospel. The **Sentido Latino** podcast is now available on YouTube, an additional platform to reach out with our Hispanic ministry messages and resources to new communities in the United States and beyond. In less than a year, our YouTube channel has 50,000-plus subscribers. Sentido Latino also now has more than one million views across all platforms.



**Thred** is equipping Christians to share their faith in the digital world. Two downloadable resources were created to help individuals tell their story. *The Search for Self* reminds users that as Christ-followers we identify as children of God, which in this image-oriented world we live in is not always easy to remember. *Not My Job* encourages people to see their place in the Gospel narrative and inspires them to talk about what God has done and is doing in their lives. In addition, an ongoing email series gives 20,000-plus subscribers tangible tips and easy-to-use writing prompts for sharing their faith on social media or through text message or email.

**Vivenciar.net** continues to reach Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking individuals worldwide. More people than ever are searching online for information and guidance on topics like depression, toxic relationships, anxiety, and suicide. Vivenciar.net

# IMPACTING PEOPLE



## right where they are



LHM showcased our *Spiritual Conversations: Sharing Life, Faith, and Jesus with Friends* resource developed for high school students throughout the LCMS Youth Gathering. In addition to sharing information at our exhibit booth, several staff members took the stage each day to share a taste of the interactive curriculum with attendees. Please pray that the influence of this seven-course curriculum continues to spread the Gospel among high schoolers and equips them to recognize and respond to opportunities to have spiritual conversations.

Several new **Project Connect** booklets were published this year. *Getting (Re) Started in Prayer* looks at the basics of prayer—why we do it, who do we pray to—and gives some practical suggestions for getting started. Another booklet, *35 Character-Building Prayers for My Grandchild, Vol. 1*, is ideal for grandparents and parents alike and covers subjects like boldness, encouragement, generosity, and humility in easy-to-read prayers based on relevant Scripture texts.



*How to Forgive as We Have Been Forgiven* discusses the virtually endless circumstances where people hurt one another and how the need for forgiveness is unending. Mustering up the will to forgive may seem impossible, but that's where God comes in. As He has forgiven us in Christ so, too, we can forgive others.

A 12-part Bible study for the incarcerated, *More Gifted Than You Realize*, is now available online as a download and on our Pando app. This study teaches the reader that everyone has a gift with gifts to share. Inmate testimonies were included as a helpful witness for readers to learn how God might be using them right where they are, as well as how He might be preparing them for service when they re-enter civilian life. We now have more than 10,000 subscribers on the Pando app who are accessing our resources for the incarcerated. The Edovo app continues to be successful as well, and it is now available in more than 1,400 facilities across the country.



In May, our director of **The Hopeful Neighborhood Project™** served as a keynote presenter for around 500 attendees at the 50th annual Neighborhoods USA Conference. The event gathers neighborhood leaders from around the country to share best practices and celebrate success stories. In addition to the keynote, our program director also hosted a workshop with a panel discussing National Good Neighbor Day and led an asset-mapping workshop.

The latest *Nurturing Your Faith* Bible study wrapped up its four-session series in the fall issue of LHM's corporate publication, *The Lutheran Layman. Life to the Full* explored the abundant life Jesus offers to His followers.

see next page

# Leadership & financials

## LHM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(As of January 1, 2026)

### Officers

Kurt Senske  
*Chair*  
Austin, Texas

Linda Arnold  
*Secretary*  
Oswego, Illinois

Donald Scifres  
*Vice Chair*  
Greenwood, Indiana

Kirk Farney  
*Treasurer*  
Hinsdale, Illinois

### Directors

Karl Abraham  
Lochaber-Ouest, Quebec, Canada

Melanie Braun  
Tempe, Arizona

Ryan Bredow  
Gilbert, Arizona

Jim Dankenbring  
St. Louis, Missouri

Mark Duesenberg  
Rocky River, Ohio

Vincent W. James  
Boston, Massachusetts

Virginia Miller  
Rochester, Minnesota

Rev. Tom Pfothenhauer  
*Pastoral Advisor*  
Woodbury, Minnesota

Gordon D. Tresch  
Williamsville, New York

## THE LHM FOUNDATION

(As of January 1, 2026)

### Officers

Mercedes Hendricks  
*Chair*  
Laguna Hills, California

Aaron Pawlitz  
*Secretary*  
St. Louis, Missouri

David Leege  
*Vice Chair*  
Alexandria, Virginia

David Lanius  
*Treasurer*  
St. Louis, Missouri

Becky Pagel  
*Interim President*  
Chesterfield, Missouri

### Trustees

Matthew Brickler  
Warson Woods, Missouri

Kurt Buchholz  
*LHM CEO*  
Grant, Minnesota

Thomas Dankenbring  
Kirkwood, Missouri

Sue Elsholz  
Birmingham, Michigan

Cory Hillmann  
St. Louis, Missouri

Scott Homan  
St. Louis, Missouri

Vincent W. James  
*Board of Directors Rep.*  
Boston, Massachusetts

Jack Kidwell  
Bay City, Michigan

Lloyd Probasco  
Grand Island, Nebraska

Kurt Senske  
*Int'l LLL Board Chair*  
Austin, Texas

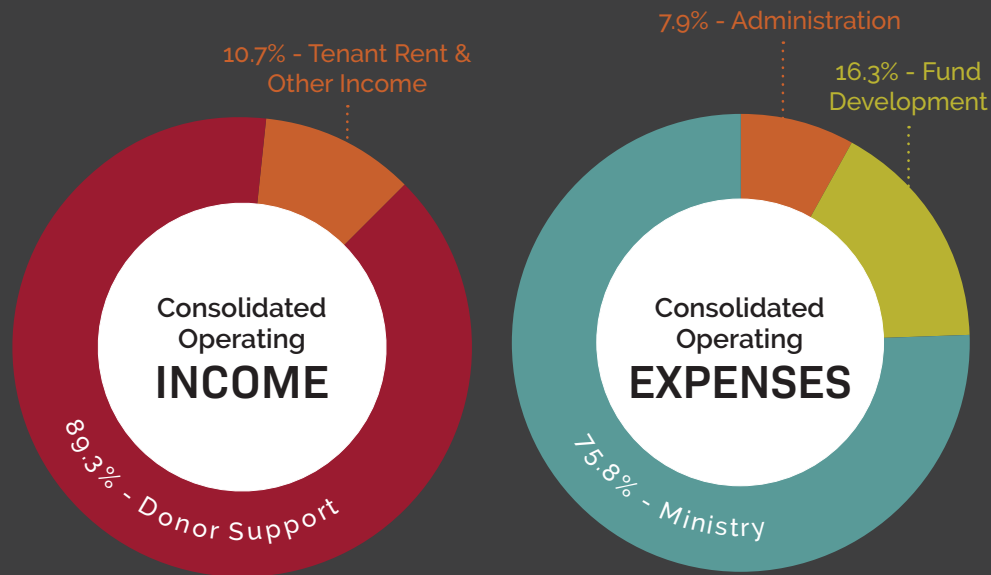
## International Lutheran Laymen's League and Subsidiaries Consolidating Statement of Activities (in thousands)

Year ended May 31, 2025, with comparative totals for 2024

	INT'L LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE	LHM FOUNDATION	2025 CONSOLIDATED TOTALS	2024 CONSOLIDATED TOTALS
<b>OPERATING SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>				
Donor support	\$32,734	\$331	\$33,065	\$30,861
Building tenant rent	1,262	-	1,262	1,044
Other income, net	726	1,990	2,716	3,769
<b>Operating Income</b>	<b>34,722</b>	<b>2,321</b>	<b>37,043</b>	<b>35,674</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>				
Ministries	28,261	-	28,261	27,711
Building tenant services	1,336	-	1,336	1,299
Administration and Fundraising	9,335	138	9,473	9,939
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>38,932</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>39,070</b>	<b>38,949</b>
<b>Operating Income in Excess of Expenses</b>	<b>(4,210)</b>	<b>2,183</b>	<b>(2,027)</b>	<b>(3,275)</b>
Endowment and other fund distributions	1,764	(1,764)	-	-
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>(2,446)</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>(2,027)</b>	<b>(3,275)</b>
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</b>	<b>28,411</b>	<b>20,996</b>	<b>49,407</b>	<b>52,682</b>
<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>\$25,965</b>	<b>\$21,415</b>	<b>\$47,380</b>	<b>\$49,407</b>

Lutheran Hour Ministries is the registered d/b/a name for the International Lutheran Laymen's League. A copy of the full audit report is available online at [lhm.org/report](http://lhm.org/report).

The LHM Board of Directors and The Lutheran Hour Ministries Foundation want to thank you for being part of the LHM family in 2025. The work that we are blessed to do is only possible because of God's grace and the tens of thousands of passionate lay members and volunteers who partner with this ministry every day. Please continue to remember us in your prayers as we work to discern and follow the Lord's guidance for LHM.



# Christ Exalted as Lord and King in 2026 Lenten Devotions by PAUL SCHREIBER

Coming Ash Wednesday, February 18, Lutheran Hour Ministries' **Daily Devotions** will transition into the season of Lent. This year LHM is again offering two original selections in English and Spanish, both of which celebrate and honor Christ's preeminent roles as divine King and universal Savior. In English, Dr. Kari Vo authored *Behold Your King!* In Spanish, *Jesucristo: Exaltado Entre Las Naciones* ("Jesus: Exalted Among the Nations") was penned by 25 authors from Spain to South America to the United States. Devotions can be found at [lhm.org/lent](http://lhm.org/lent) and [paraelcamino.com/cuaresma](http://paraelcamino.com/cuaresma).

In *Behold Your King!* Vo's exploration of Christ's passion begins with John's acknowledgement of Him as God who "became flesh." This ineffable act of humility on Jesus' part is crowned—through His life, ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection—with His universal kingship born of love and obedience to God the Father. To this ultimate love, Vo asks readers, "Is He your King? Will you have Him, bruised and bloody? Will you acknowledge



Him as your own? Will you follow Him, even to the cross? Will you accept the gifts He gives you there—forgiveness for your sin, covering for your shame, love for you, you personally—forever?"

The global group of 25 writers who have written *Jesucristo: Exaltado Entre Las Naciones* "are men and women deeply committed to the mission of making the Name of Jesus known to

all," says Rev. Germán Novelli, LHM's Hispanic Ministries director. Each devotion's Scripture passage, author reflection, and prayer give readers an excellent daily blessing for their 2026 Lenten journey. "Inspired by Psalm 46, these messages invite us to repentance, to feel sorrow for our sins, to prepare ourselves through prayer and meditation on God's Word, and to embrace the faith that leads us to believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior," Novelli says.

Be sure to look at LHM's other Lenten resources, too. These include *Tears of Hope*, a radio drama, and a Holy Week Special for Holy Thursday and Good Friday, featuring LHM staff voices and music by Erin Bode. Three TV specials—*Easter Is*, *The Puzzle Club Easter Adventure*, and *3 Days*—capture the Easter story in a fun and engaging way. Two texts, *Easter: An Empty Tomb*, and the children's booklet, *The Easter Story*, tell this timeless story afresh. Also, the **LHM Learn** course, *The Marks of Love*, is ideal for exploring Jesus' life and ministry. These can all be found at [lhm.org/easter](http://lhm.org/easter). ♦



## LHM Board Member Honored for Book Highlighting Dr. Walter A. Maier by CHAD FIX

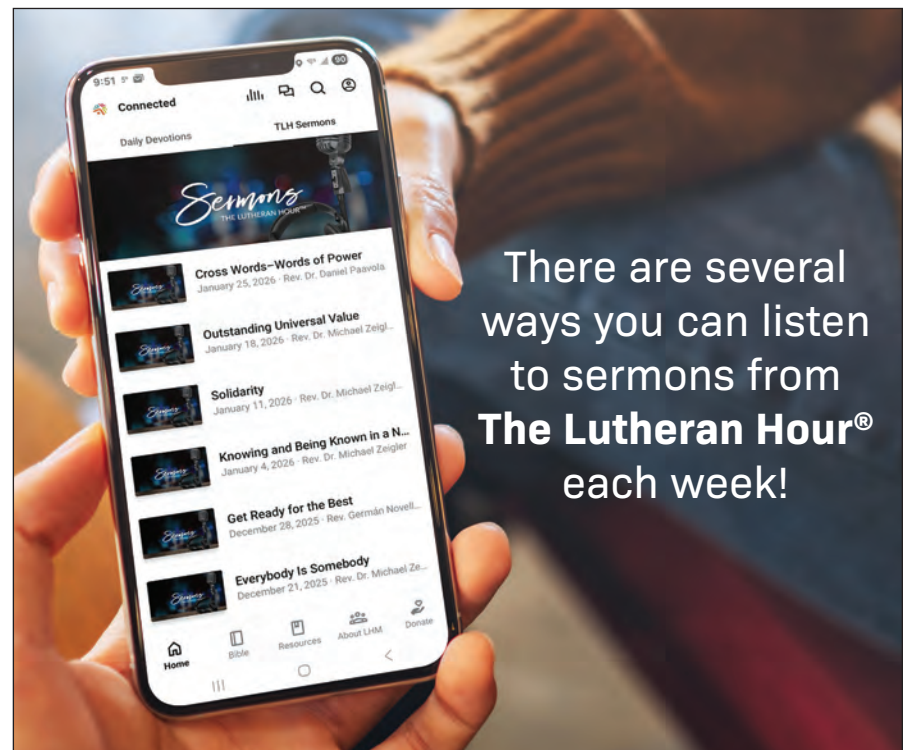
The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic has awarded its St. Paul/Biglerville Prize for a work of mature scholarship in the field of American Lutheran church history to LHM Board member Kirk D. Farney

for his 2022 book, *Ministers of a New Medium: Broadcasting Theology in the Radio Ministries of Fulton J. Sheen and Walter A. Maier*. The book was also named Best Major Publication by Concordia Historical Institute.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Maier and Sheen rose to prominence using the power of the relatively new medium of radio to share the Gospel with millions of people. Through weekly nationwide broadcasts, **The Lutheran Hour** and the *Catholic Hour* attracted listeners from a variety of religious affiliations, establishing these preachers as both religious and cultural forces during the period of radio's heralded "Golden Age."

Through in-depth studies of their theologies and preaching methods, Farney highlights how Maier and Sheen's timely application of God's Word to the struggles of the times established a bond between the broadcasters and their audiences. Listeners responded in droves, not only by tuning in each week, but by mailing in letters and donations. As a result, these network broadcasts brought Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism from the periphery of the American religious landscape to a much greater level of recognition.

To purchase the book, visit [ivpress.com/ministers-of-a-new-medium](http://ivpress.com/ministers-of-a-new-medium). Farney is vice president for advancement, vocation, and alumni engagement and a member of the history faculty at Wheaton College. He has served on LHM's Board of Directors since 2022. ♦



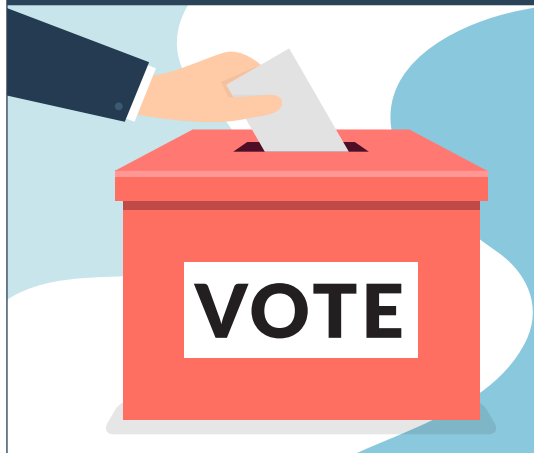
There are several ways you can listen to sermons from **The Lutheran Hour®** each week!

For a full list of listening options, visit

 **LHM.ORG/LISTEN**



# 2026 Candidates for the INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The following individuals are this year's candidates for open positions on the Int'l LLL Board of Directors in compliance with Article III of the current Bylaws. Contributing members of the ministry **who register with Lutheran Hour Ministries' headquarters by March 15** will be able to vote in the 2026 election if they are also members of a congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod or Lutheran Church—Canada.

Eligible members can register at [lhm.org/voter](http://lhm.org/voter) by entering the unique ID and PIN found on the postcard received in February. If you are not able to go online, you may place this postcard in an envelope and mail it back to LHM at 660 Mason Ridge Center Dr., St. Louis MO 63141. Individuals returning the postcard in an envelope postmarked by March 15 will receive a paper ballot.

The election runs from April 15 through May 15. To be counted, online and paper ballots must be received by the chosen tabulation firm no later than May 15. Results will be reported this summer in *The Lutheran Layman*.

**Let your voice be heard!  
Register online today!**

 **LHM.ORG/VOTER**

## BOARD NOMINEES

(listed in alphabetical order)



### **Karl Abraham** of *Lochaber-Ouest, Quebec, Canada*

Abraham has served increasingly senior positions for Environment and Climate Change Canada, a federal department for the Canadian government, since 2002. He currently is chief engineer for electricity policy, managing a team of more than 20 engineers and focusing on the generation of electricity through engaging with stakeholders, developing policy, and promoting and administering regulations. He has received numerous employment awards for contributions to various regulations and program development. As a trained chemical engineer, he has an extensive background in program design, policy governance, communications, and strategic thinking. An LHM Board member since 2023, Abraham's congregational volunteer positions have included Sunday school teacher, trustee/secretary, and member of the church council.



### **Jim Dankenbring** of *St. Louis, Missouri*

Dankenbring is a partner in the law firm Spencer Fane LLP, representing businesses in mergers and acquisitions, securities matters, contract negotiations, and executive compensation. He was previously a certified public accountant with Ernst & Young. Dankenbring led his congregation's capital campaign and has served or chaired numerous non-profit boards like Lutheran Senior Services, Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis, The Foundation for Called Workers, and Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation. A current LHM Board member, he and his wife co-chaired LHM's SENT Initiative. His many distinctions include The Best Lawyers in America® (2012-2023) and Best Lawyers® Lawyer of the Year in Corporate Compliance Law (2017), and Corporate Governance Law (2022).



### **Mary Scott** of *Irvine, California*

Scott has served as chief executive officer/executive director of Lutheran High School of Orange County since 2020 following four years as head of school at Concordia International School in Shanghai, China. She previously spent more than 30 years at Concordia University (Irvine, California) in increasingly responsible positions, completing her tenure there as provost and executive vice president. A commissioned minister of religion in the LCMS, her extensive volunteer service includes six years chairing the LCMS Chief Academic Officers Association. She holds a bachelor's degree in physical education from Concordia University Chicago, a master's degree in athletic administration from Adelphi University, and a doctorate in education (institutional management) from Pepperdine University.



### **Ron Wheeler** of *Lee's Summit, Missouri*

Wheeler has been in the insurance business since 1980 and is licensed in all 50 states. He is part-owner and chief executive officer of a national network brokerage that markets life insurance and annuities through 1,800-plus agents representing cultures from all around the world. Among his volunteer work is a dedicated record of service at Holy Trinity Lutheran in Grandview, Missouri, where he currently is congregational chair. Wheeler has also held various board positions with the Missouri District of the LCMS, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (including nine years as investment committee chair), and past leadership positions with National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (past president of Missouri NAIFA). ♦



## Growing Households of Faith Through a Sermon Series

by MEGAN MCDANIEL

— Photo from  
St. John's Church

Lutheran Hour Ministries has created convenient resources to meet people right where they are to connect with Jesus and spread hope and faith throughout their community. In addition, we have a long history of partnering with congregations to implement outreach activities that align with their Gospel-proclamation mission.

Pastors of St. John's Church (LCMS) in Denver, Colorado, shared how they have used LHM resources based on research done in partnership with Barna Group.

"Our Campus Pastor, PJ Aarsvold, read the book, *The Spiritually Vibrant Home*, prior to accepting the call to our church and recommended it to us," says Lead Pastor Andrew Farhat. "I had a conversation surrounding the book with our Director of Outreach and Discipleship, AJ Vega, and it resonated with us regarding our vision to raise up everyday missionaries and a family discipleship pathway: Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Conversations, Hospitality."

They created a four-part sermon series based on this pathway, along with a summary sermon. Each week, members of the congregation were encouraged to read the appropriate chapter from *The Spiritually Vibrant Home* book before each sermon. "We also encouraged our Life Groups during the series to watch the supporting videos from LHM online," says Farhat. "In addition, we began a three-part course called 'Spiritually Vibrant Homes' that was inspired by the book and the *Households of Faith* slide deck."

"The sermon series was for our two campuses since we are a multi-site church," says Farhat. "An average of 402 people (in person and online) tuned in to our worship services for that sermon series. The "Spiritually Vibrant Homes" course will be ongoing and will serve as our Evangelism plan." ♦

**LHM has created convenient resources to meet people right where they are ...**



LHM's partnership with the SAT-7 multimedia ministry continues to shine the light of Christ ...

## Making God's Love Visible in the Middle East and North Africa by CHAD FIX

LHM's partnership with the SAT-7 multimedia ministry continues to shine the light of Christ into more than 20 countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), as well as several countries in Central Asia. A new program, *Light Night*, launched Dec. 1, 2025, and is the seventh broadcast season of collaboration in Arabic. Building on our experience working together, *Light Night* continues the successful format of using young, in-studio hosts that discuss filmed segments of the program. Musical guests and a live audience are also incorporated to make the program engaging and lively. Geared towards young adults, the program explores themes common to this generation, discussing and debating issues from a biblical perspective.

Another multi-year project with SAT-7, *Reconnecting the MENA to Hope*, offers multi-language programming on SAT-7's three channels for adults to help people from across the region engage with the Bible's core teachings and grow in hope and faith. The programs in this project are based upon content from LHM's topical **Project Connect** booklets, with content tailored to the unique audiences and cultures in MENA nations. In its 2025 project report, SAT-7 reports that they are receiving "fantastic feedback from across the region that the programs have helped many people encounter God's life-changing love."

A Syrian man named Ezz regularly watches *Heartbeat*, a televised podcast on SAT-7 ARABIC. He says, "Your posts are wonderful. I'm not Christian, but I

love Christ and reading verses from the Bible. I'm looking for real solutions." Similarly, Mona, a teenage viewer from Iraq, described her longing for a deeper relationship with God. "Your words are beautiful; they made me think," she says. "Can you explain more about how I can return to a relationship with God? I feel my heart longs for a real connection with Him, but sometimes the path feels unclear."

These conversations reveal the transformative potential of *Heartbeat*, while also showing that viewers are asking complex theological and spiritual questions that go beyond the scope of the existing LHM booklets. As a result, season two of *Heartbeat* will continue to use the booklets as a springboard, but the content will evolve to include new, audience-driven material addressing questions around Jesus' divine identity, the Trinity, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

New episodes of *Let's Talk About This* on SAT-7 TÜRK will dig deeper into the more complex aspects of faith and life. New program elements will include guest interviews, viewer testimonies, and more interactive formats.

*GPS* reaches a Persian-speaking audience on the SAT-7 PARS channel. A second season of broadcasts will focus on connecting the various dimensions of the Christian faith with contemporary life through a weekly devotional. Each episode will be built around a biblical passage with a specific theme, in the areas of spiritual and church life, family and relationships, and social and cultural issues. ♦



## Students Experience “The Gift That Changed Everything”

by CHAD FIX

**LHM-Guatemala** is one of LHM’s ministry centers that offers **Project JOEL** as a values-based youth program that provides biblically based guidance in making healthy lifestyle choices. It is approved by the Guatemalan government to provide this program to students in public schools.

LHM staff and volunteers recently gave a presentation titled “The Gift that Changed Everything” to students graduating from the primary level at a local school. Following a short motivational activity, the LHM team shared information about what the Bible is all about. They explained it is a “library” written over thousands of years by different authors and including various literary genres (poetry, history, prophecy, wisdom, codes). Yet its message remains relevant and personal for each one. The presentation reflected on passages from Psalm 119, highlighting that the Word of God sustains, guides, and gives hope both in times of joy and difficulty. Current analogies were also used to illustrate how the Bible accompanies, protects, and guides daily life.

At the end of the presentation, the students eagerly opened a box of Bibles donated by the Lutheran Heritage Foundation and distributed them with visible joy. One of the students, José Luis, began to look through his Bible with great interest. He approached the LHM team to ask questions about the content and learned it was Luther’s *Small Catechism* that included explanations of the Ten Commandments, and the Lord’s Prayer, along with guidance on how to apply God’s Word in daily life. The young man expressed deep gratitude and immense joy, as this was the first Bible he had ever owned. ♦



... the LHM team shared information about what the Bible is all about.

## The Life-Changing Power of Sharing the Gospel

by MEGAN MCDANIEL

Growing up, most of Rodney Smith’s family did not go to church. His exposure to church was through his Christian Pentecostal grandmother while he lived with her from ages 11-13. He was baptized when he was 12 years old, but drifted away from the Christian faith. For the next 40 years of his life, he considered himself an agnostic but still a seeker, so he attended adult Bible classes and church with his wife, Janet, and their two children. While he was seeking answers his immediate family, including his sister, continued to pray for him. The Holy Spirit continued working in his heart, and he was eventually led to make a commitment.

Now, Smith is determined to share his faith and encourage others in the Gospel. He credits LHM as a prime contributor to his faith journey.

“LHM has such a good overseas ministry, and they are able to spread the Good News, which is what we’re called to do,” says Smith.

In 2004, shortly after he and his wife learned about LHM, they went on a ministry trip to China and experienced LHM’s efforts firsthand. When he came back, he found out that his church didn’t have an LHM Ambassador, so he signed up to be the Ambassador. Over the years, he hosted many LHM Sunday events, shared LHM materials with others, and attended several conventions.

He began serving as the Lutheran Hour Ministries coordinator for Northern Virginia, which exposed him to many new ways to spread the Good News worldwide. “I had the opportunity to go and set up displays for our ministry at various places, including the government offices in Washington D.C.,” says Smith.

In addition to serving as an LHM Ambassador, Smith served as the secretary for the LHM Capital District board for many years. “I also organized two or three Thrivent action teams, where they would give you \$200 in seed money for ministry efforts,” he says. “I organized several times where we went and helped a local school and another church. I started a men’s group at my church in 2006, and we would do



- Photo from Greg Miller

**Smith credits LHM as a prime contributor to his faith journey.**

service projects as a group.”

“God called me to lead a mission team to Guatemala in July 2015, where we shared the Good News of Jesus through a vacation Bible school at a public elementary school,” says Smith. “We completed a ceiling replacement at the LHM ministry office as well. Seeing how the Lord brought the resources together and opened the doors for this mission, as well as working with the wonderful Christian team members from across the U.S. and Guatemala, has greatly enhanced my faith.”

Recently, LLL (Lutheran Laymen’s League) Capital District President Yvette Moy presented Smith with a certificate and other gifts in recognition for his volunteer service during a visit to his home congregation, St. John’s Lutheran Church in Alexandria, Virginia.

Seeing how God uses LHM to change people’s lives led Smith and his wife to financially support the ministry. Every year, they give to LHM through their IRA by using a portion of their required minimum distribution. As members of The Hoffmann Society, they believe in supporting the work of LHM beyond their lifetime.

“I ask the Lord continually to show me the way. I want to tell others about Jesus Christ sacrificing Himself so that by grace I am saved, and they can be also.”

Looking to make a gift to LHM through your IRA? Consult with your tax advisor to make sure that a gift made through your IRA is a good fit for you. After that, simply contact your IRA administrator and request that a distribution be made directly to LHM. Questions about IRAs or other gift options? Contact our gift planning staff at 1-877-333-1963 or [lhm-gift@lhm.org](mailto:lhm-gift@lhm.org). ♦

## LHM Ambassadors: Front-Line Laity Sharing LHM Resources by PAUL SCHREIBER

**A**s LHM creates resources for individuals and congregations to use, getting the word out about their availability is essential. This is where LHM Ambassadors come in. Their on-the-ground work, visiting with churches, ministry leaders, and laypeople, is vital in this effort.

An Ambassador is a congregation member who nurtures a relationship between LHM and their congregation for the purpose of sharing resources and helping others use them. Ambassadors are integral to LHM's mission of energizing, equipping, and engaging laity for outreach. Currently, more than 500 Ambassadors serve congregations all across the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. Learn more and register to be an Ambassador at [lhm.org/ambassador](http://lhm.org/ambassador).

Ambassadors do this in several ways. They make teachers and school leaders aware of **Gospel Adventures** and the Gospel Adventure Show. They share books, research, and resources based on LHM's partnership with Barna Group. They highlight Advent and Lent television and online specials, in addition to seasonal devotions in English and Spanish. And they promote LHM's Bible studies, **Project**

*Ambassadors are integral to LHM's mission of energizing, equipping, and engaging laity for outreach.*



**Connect** booklets, LHM's Spanish-language website, podcasts, **The Lutheran Hour, Daily Devotions**, prison ministry resources, **LHM Learn, Thred**, and resources for veterans.

Ambassadors update congregations on LHM resources by hosting an **LHM Sunday** like the one recently held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church

in Sedalia, Missouri. There, Ambassador Sharon Hutcheson highlighted LHM's outreach mission, shared resources, and answered questions. She also coordinates the Lutheran Laymen's League booth at the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia.

LHM has training modules to assist Ambassadors. There's also a Reward Program on the Ambassador website of up to \$50 in LHM store credit for those doing various activities and a bonus event like Hutcheson. She finds these modules helpful as she communicates with church leaders and congregations. "The training modules are very informative," Hutcheson says. "Being an Ambassador is fulfilling as I see materials being shared and used by others. It is also very encouraging when others agree to be an Ambassador in their congregation."

For Hutcheson, helping others is business as usual in her household. "LLL and LHM have been part of my family for many years. I'm glad to carry on the family tradition started by my father."

"Sharon is a perfect example of all that an Ambassador should be. She goes above and beyond to promote and share everything that LHM has to offer. I'm always excited to see what she is going to do next!" says Suzie Sallee, LHM's community facilitator for congregations. ♦

### *Annual Director Workshops Pave the Way for a Growing Gospel Impact* by CHAD FIX



**R**egional workshops for LHM ministry center directors take place throughout the year, gathering staff for training and strengthening ministry efforts. The workshops provide not only high-level training opportunities but also foster stronger bonds of collaboration among team members.

Five ministry center directors from Europe and Central Asia, plus several headquarters' staff members, participated in the most recent session (previous workshops were held in Latin America, Africa, and Asia). Throughout the week, a series of insightful presentations covered strategic, operational, and professional development topics that delivered valuable tools to enhance ministry impact in the respective areas.

"This was the best regional event I have attended," says Artis Purins, director of **LHM-Latvia**. "The presence of LHM leadership created a sense of unity in an atmosphere of joy, learning, friendship, and faith."

From various team-building activities to a presentation on *The Spiritual Conversation Curve* and other ministry updates, "all sessions were thoughtful, practical, and inspiring for our mission work," says Purins. "Several encouraged us to analyze and reflect on our ministry experiences, helping us identify strengths and areas for improvement."

Purins especially appreciated working together with other directors, sharing thoughts, and praying. "Those moments helped us connect deeply not only with the topics but also with one another," he says. "The commitment of the faithful local teams is incredible. At every turn, they do not hesitate to give their thanks and appreciation for the support and prayers as they carry out their daily work to share Christ in their communities." ♦

## THE TRUTH *Unchanging*

LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES SUNDAY 2026

LHM Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate the critical partnership between churches, individuals, and LHM in *Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church*.

Learn how you can celebrate with your own congregation at

 [LHM.ORG/LHMSUNDAY](http://LHM.ORG/LHMSUNDAY)

# CHANGING LIVES AROUND THE WORLD *with the Gospel*

by CHAD FIX



## *Middle East & North Africa*

Manel grew up in a non-Christian religious household. Troubled by violence in her community, she began seeking information about Christianity. She found a Facebook page run by LHM staff in the **Middle East and North Africa**. Although she was initially hesitant to contact the staff, their immediate and welcoming response gave her peace. They welcomed her questions and encouraged her through their digital conversations. The staff shared Bible verses with her and encouraged her to study the Bible. Manel was then connected with an online Christian community where she fellowshiped with others who had similar backgrounds. Manel continues to learn more about Christianity as she embraces a relationship with God.

*The LHM staff shared Bible verses with Manel and encouraged her to study the Bible.*

*"I now have hope that God has plans for my future."*

Saholy is an inmate at a local prison. Before she was convicted, she worked as a dressmaker and was an active volunteer in the youth department of her church. A few years into her sentence, she connected with **LHM-Madagascar** and began helping their volunteers with the **Bible Correspondence Course (BCC)** they hosted in the prison. This program deepened her knowledge of the Bible and helped her stay connected with Jesus. "I now have hope that God has plans for my future," says Saholy. "I am grateful to help my fellow inmates follow in my footsteps and complete the BCC program."

## *Madagascar*



## *Thailand*

Tamakorn worked as a server in a restaurant before experiencing health challenges. He has always practiced a non-Christian religion, but one day he heard a radio program from **LHM-Thailand**. He learned about Christ's love and wondered if Jesus could help him. Tamakorn contacted the LHM-Thailand staff to request some topical booklets and enroll in their Bible Correspondence Course. The staff also encouraged him to go to a local church, and he began attending weekly services to be nurtured in his growing faith. Through the power of God's Word, he became a Christian and was baptized. "Your radio programs and materials have strengthened me spiritually, and I'm happier in my life than ever before," says Tamakorn.

*Through the power of God's Word, Tamakorn became a Christian and was baptized.*

*Damaris is now an active member of a church.*

Damaris is a single mother who often feels alone and hopeless. She questioned if God truly cared for her. Damaris was recently invited to a Bible study organized by **LHM-Nicaragua** in her community. Despite her initial hesitation, she attended and heard messages about God's love, forgiveness, and restoration. Something began to stir in her heart. She enrolled in the ministry's Bible Correspondence Courses and learned that even when she struggles, she is not alone—God has a plan for her life. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, she began to pray and seek a deeper understanding of her relationship with Christ. Damaris is now an active member of a church, helping with community outreach and supporting other women facing similar struggles. Her faith has given her renewed strength to face each day with hope and confidence and fill her home with love, prayer, and a sense of security.

## *Nicaragua*



Individuals around the world experience the Gospel through Lutheran Hour Ministries' culturally relevant programs and resources nearly 275 million times each week. Below are just a few examples to show how God has been using LHM recently to change lives around the world with His Good News.



## Sri Lanka

Arul is in his 40s and has two daughters. About ten years ago, his life took a sudden turn when he was diagnosed with a rare nerve disease. Over time, he became almost completely bedridden. Now, he is also losing his eyesight and his ability to speak. Though it's been a difficult journey, Arul continues to hold tight to his faith. He regularly listens to songs provided by **LHM-Sri Lanka** on YouTube to lift his spirits while in pain. An LHM staff member recently visited Arul and gave him an audio Bible. Every morning, the family plays the Bible and starts the day with worship songs included on the SD card. His daughters also use it to learn their Sunday school lessons. In a home filled with pain and uncertainty, God's Word has become their light and strength.

*Arul regularly listens to songs provided by **LHM-Sri Lanka** to lift his spirits.*

*For the first time, Elijah says he does not feel alone.*

Elijah is in his early 30s and no longer communicates with his family. He came across an LHM social media page in **Central Asia** and sent a message through WhatsApp. During ongoing conversations with an LHM staff member, Elijah shared his loneliness and emptiness and how he has been searching for meaning in life. The staff member listens, encourages him, and shares about the love of God. For the first time, Elijah says he does not feel alone. Knowing that someone cares for him and is walking alongside him has given him hope. Step by step, we pray he will be guided toward a church and the chance to discover that in Christ he can truly find the family he has been longing for.



## Central Asia



## Peru

**LHM-Peru** recently placed stickers offering messages of hope on a bridge known for numerous suicide attempts. Ignacio, a 23-year-old whose life was filled with rejection and pain, reached out to **LHM-Peru** after seeing the messages during a moment of deep despair. "You were my last hope," says Ignacio. "If you hadn't answered, I probably would have ended my life." That same day, **LHM** staff met with him to provide the emotional support he urgently needed—listening with compassion and walking with him through his pain. At the end of their time together, they prayed, surrendering his burden to God and asking for renewed strength. Since then, the **LHM** team has remained in constant contact with Ignacio to offer not only emotional support but spiritual guidance, which he has received with openness and gratitude.

*LHM staff met with Ignacio to provide the emotional support he urgently needed.*

*The film touched Oswalds unexpectedly.*

One evening, a coworker invited Oswalds to a local church where **LHM-Latvia** was showing the film, *Love Comes Softly*. Oswalds admitted he wasn't sure why he agreed to go—perhaps, deep down, he had been hoping for some kind of change in his life. The film touched him unexpectedly, and the people he met there were genuinely warm and welcoming. A woman invited him to take part in an introduction to Christianity course, and Oswalds reluctantly agreed even though he knew very little about the Christian faith. A few days later, he noticed the **LHM-Latvia** office was located near his home. He felt like that was a sign, so he stopped in hoping to learn a bit more about Christianity before starting the introductory course. **LHM's** online courses, *Introduction to Christianity* and *What Lutherans Believe*, were exactly what he had been seeking. He continues to request additional materials to learn more about the Christian faith. ♦



## Latvia



## Neighbors Get Busy During December's 31 Days of Neighboring by PAUL SCHREIBER

December is a tricky month for many people. While holiday lights and festivities may *seem* like the norm, far too many could use a good neighbor to lift their spirits. Recognizing this disconnect with the season, **The Hopeful Neighborhood Project (HNP)** from LHM and their partners at CommunityWorks created the Advent-inspired 31 Days of Neighboring calendar of ideas that could be the start of something great for you and your neighbors.

At [nationalgoodneighbor.org/31-days-of-neighboring](http://nationalgoodneighbor.org/31-days-of-neighboring), you'll find pictures and images, helpful suggestions on how to be more neighborly, and numerous links showing real people doing really good things for others in their neighborhoods and communities. The motivation to do this was twofold, according to Jennifer Prophete, director of HNP and National Good Neighbor Day.

"First, 31 Days of Neighboring would be an excellent opportunity to connect and uplift different neighboring partner organizations. Second, it gives those who participated in National Good Neighbor Day (NGND) on September 28 another chance to connect with neighbors they

met then, to deepen a relationship with them during the holidays. The 31 Days of Neighboring calendar ties in nicely with the goals of NGND to make it a catalyst for further neighboring throughout the year," Prophete says.

A quick click on the 31 Days of Neighboring calendar offers ideas for December or for the rest of the year! Holiday-centered activities might be to host a gingerbread house-building contest; ask to walk a neighbor's dog when it's cold outside; or drop off a note at people's homes who've gone the extra mile with their decorations. Year-round ideas include inviting a neighbor to a sporting event; creating a free coat or clothes rack to put in your driveway; hosting a family for dinner; or spending some time on your front porch, reading a book, drinking some tea, or playing your guitar—and then just see what happens.

The idea is catching on. People appreciate the suggestions of how they can help others and the chance to share their ideas of what they do where they live. All in all, the first 31 Days of Neighboring went very well. "We had some great engagement in the terms of 'events' on the website with 6,690 people going to the site, clicking, downloading, or viewing the 31 Days of Neighboring page. In total, we had 23 different leaders/nonprofits representing 14 different states contribute by giving ideas and sending it out to their people," says Prophete. ♦

*A quick click on the 31 Days of Neighboring calendar offers ideas for December or for the rest of the year!*



## Using Advent Devotions to Build a Family Activity Kit

by MEGAN MCDANIEL

— Photo from Samantha Davis

Advent is the season of preparation and anticipation, leading up to Christmas and continuing to Epiphany. On the one hand, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world as both God and Man so that our sins might be forgiven. On the other hand, we anticipate the day when Jesus will return to earth and bring an end to this world. Those will be scary days, but we can look forward to the end of the world with hope because through faith in Jesus, the end of this world will mean the beginning of a new life with Christ for eternity.

Samantha Davis serves as Director of Christian Education at St. John Lutheran Church in Woodbury, Minnesota. Last year, she came up with the idea of providing a hands-on activity that would complement LHM's **Advent Devotions**.

She created Family Advent Activity Kits as a way to encourage younger families to use LHM's Advent Devotions together.

"Since the Advent Devotions focused on a number of the characters of the Christmas story, the kits had families decorate small wooden dolls, creating a small nativity of the witnesses who watched for the coming of the Savior," says Davis.

"Each kit came with the wooden peg dolls, washi tape to decorate with, and display character cards that listed an extra Bible passage families could read together to learn more about that person, and an instruction packet. They also included a schedule showing which characters to add on which days, based on when they were featured in the devotions."

The visual element of the nativity was meant to encourage families to keep going back to LHM's devotions throughout the Advent season.

"I love being able to create resources that make it easier for families to start faith conversations at home, and the Advent Devotions that we were already using throughout our congregation were such a great foundation for this! It made it a lot easier to pull everything together," says Davis.

"We had a lot of demand for the kits, both to use with children and grandchildren alike. I think they turned out really cute, and they generated a lot of excitement for families to dive into the devotions. We set out 30 boxes, and we ran out!" ♦

*"I love being able to create resources that make it easier for families to start faith conversations at home ..."*

# Women's Bible Study Digs into Project Connect Booklet: *Everyone Is a Gift* by MEGAN MCDANIEL



Lutheran Hour Ministries' **Project Connect** booklets cover a wide variety of subjects in both English and Spanish. They offer Christ-centered words of spiritual comfort and hope on topics such as faith, relationships, anxiety, marriage, priorities, outreach, emotional issues, parenting, caregiving, and more. Booklets are available for purchase or can be downloaded and printed for free. Many are also available as MP3 files for easy listening.

"For years, I've been teaching a weekly Bible study called 'Monday Mornings for Women,'" says Jane Schnake, member of Christ Lutheran Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. "We began this past September by digging into the book of James. James and the apostle Paul agree that faith is a gift, meaning that anything good that we do is not our own idea, but opportunities God gives us as His workmanship, created in Jesus Christ, to make Him known."

The "Monday Mornings for Women" Bible study group consists of women aged 25 up

to their 80s. "After a class one day, one of my friends handed me the Lutheran Hour Ministries booklet from our church's Project Connect display called *Everyone Is a Gift*," says Schnake. "This beautifully written booklet shook my heart with the truths James wrote for us in the Bible."



"I purchased this booklet for our entire class, 57 women who regularly attend our class on Monday mornings," says Schnake. "I wanted their hearts to be touched with the truth of the author's invitation to ask these

simple questions: How exactly does God see the people around us? And what would it look like for us to see them that way, too?"

"The women were grateful to receive their own copy of *Everyone Is a Gift*, and I pray the Lord uses this booklet to touch our hearts with His power to live like Jesus."

To learn more about Project Connect or search our library of booklets, visit us online at [lhm.org/projectconnect](http://lhm.org/projectconnect). ♦

## A Golden Opportunity to Share the Gospel by MEGAN MCDANIEL

"Then opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh."

- Matthew 2:11b



Today, wise men and women who have invested in gold or other precious metals have seen the value of their investments skyrocket. Some of these individuals are offering their gifts to bring more people to Jesus in partnership with Lutheran Hour Ministries.

"My issue was that I kept thinking about the gold I owned and not God," says a recent donor. "The only way not to focus on it was to give it away. A few months ago, I went into sepsis, and while in the hospital, God spoke to me. He reminded me of Matthew 19:16-30, where a young man asks Jesus how to inherit eternal life, and Jesus ultimately responds by instructing him to give up his earthly possessions. I needed to get rid of my fortune because I was too focused on it, and so I did. An LHM staff member told me that LHM accepts gifts in gold. LHM reaches all over the world, so how much more could you ask for? Our purpose is for the Word to reach the whole world."

Donating gold may eliminate tax on the increase in value since you purchased it and provide you with an income tax deduction. You should consult your tax adviser for advice.

If you are considering making a gift of gold or other commodities to LHM, please contact our gift planning staff at 1-877-333-1963 or [lhm-gift@lhm.org](mailto:lhm-gift@lhm.org). ♦

Start your Lenten journey in the Word!

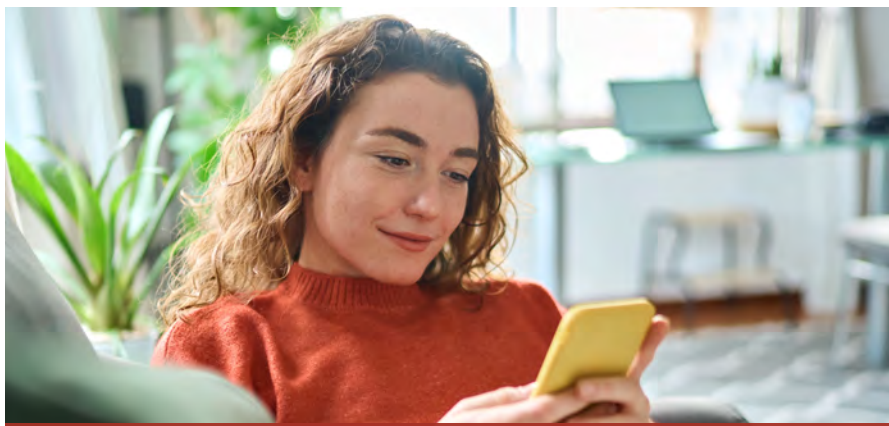
BEHOLD YOUR KING!

Lenten Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries: In *Behold Your King!*, we see the Savior stripped of His dignity, led away, and crucified on our behalf ... No one could imagine this Man was God in the flesh sent to liberate us from our sin by His death and resurrection.

Download today!

 [LHM.ORG/LENT](http://LHM.ORG/LENT)

Print, audio, and Spanish Devotions also available!



## Thred's New E-newsletter Encourages Talk of Life and Faith by PAUL SCHREIBER

Staying connected is what **Thred**, LHM's digital resource for life and faith at [thred.org](http://thred.org), is all about. And that's the idea behind its recently launched weekly e-newsletter: a thought-provoking, easy-to-read message that wants to know what your *take* is on living as a Christian in an ever-changing, ever-challenging world.

"We want to deepen our relationship with Thred followers," says Rachel Tichich, manager of digital strategy and development. "We're using this email platform as a means of reaching our 22,000-plus (and growing!) subscriber base with content that's Gospel rich, that nurtures a relationship with them, and that equips them for sharing their faith in this day and age."

The latest e-news topics have addressed joy, sharing our faith, our connection to the "stuff" we own, being in charge, owning versus giving, and feeling sufficient. Tracking prior Thred email responses has shown that people are interested in faith empowerment; in establishing and maintaining trust with others; in getting to that elusive—but attainable—place where faith conversations aren't so strange and difficult; and in better understanding how a Christian's worth is tied completely to Christ.

In each e-news, there's a feedback mechanism built in where users can answer a

multiple-choice question, or they can add their own comments in an open-text format. This has led to some healthy exchanges. "It's been encouraging to read the thoughtful and heartfelt responses we've received from members of the Thred community. We're honored to continue offering content that resonates with them and equips them to live out their faith, including online," says Andréa Vasilo, content writer for LHM.

These contacts lead to Thred sharing LHM resources, too. "Recently, we had someone chatting with Thred specifically about the topic of how to love your neighbors online in the midst of some pretty volatile digital conversations in our society. We learned that he's a Christian and not only open to more resources on the topic but actively seeking them. We're currently in communication with him, providing him with links to relevant **Project Connect** booklets and other LHM courses," says Tichich.

Thred's new e-newsletter is just one of the many ways it makes online connections with its audience. At [thred.org](http://thred.org) you'll find dozens of Christ-centered, faith-enriching blogs in six different categories. FREE, downloadable resources like Thred courses, in-depth PDFs, and a sermon kit for pastors are available. And of course, you can follow Thred on social media. ♦

*"We want to deepen our relationship with Thred followers."*

## Time Is Running out to Direct Your 2025 Thrivent Choice Dollars

by CHAD FIX

Eligible Thrivent clients with membership have a unique opportunity to help shape how Thrivent distributes its charitable outreach funding each year through the Thrivent Choice® program. Since 2010, nearly \$620 million has been directed to churches and nonprofit organizations doing vital work.

For Lutheran Hour Ministries, Thrivent Choice has made a powerful difference—providing more than \$1.75 million to help advance our mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church*. These funds directly support sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people around the world.

**Act now:** If you still have 2025 Choice Dollars available, they **must be designated by March 31, 2026**, or they will expire. Don't miss this opportunity to put your Choice Dollars to work for God's mission through LHM.

**Directing your Choice Dollars is quick and easy:**

- Visit [thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://thrivent.com/thriventchoice) and search for "Lutheran Hour Ministries" or "LHM".
- Call Thrivent at **1-800-847-4836**.

Eligibility is based on insurance premiums and contract values. Full eligibility details are available on the Thrivent Choice website.

*Please note: You must go through the gift direction process each time you are notified that Choice Dollars are available. Recurring designations are no longer offered, so action is required every year.*

Thank you for acting today to help share Christ's love with the world through Thrivent Choice. ♦



*Save the Date!*  
Annual Meeting of the Members is  
**MARCH 31**

Join us online Tuesday, March 31, to learn how your support of LHM allows people to find answers and relief through the Gospel. Hear a devotion by Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, Speaker of **The Lutheran Hour®**; updates from Global CEO Kurt Buchholz; and ministry highlights from other program leaders.

This one-hour presentation begins at 4 p.m. CST. The virtual event is FREE, but registration is required. **All attendees on March 31 will receive a FREE gift: a copy of the LHM booklets, 35 Character-Building Prayers for My Grandchild, Volumes 1 & 2.**

*Visit today to reserve your spot!*

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