



It's Time to Plant

"THEN [JESUS] SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, 'THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL, BUT THE LABORERS ARE FEW; THEREFORE PRAY EARNESTLY TO THE LORD OF THE HARVEST TO SEND OUT LABORERS INTO HIS HARVEST'" (MATT. 9:37-38).

BY PASTOR STEVEN SCHAVE,
DIRECTOR OF LCMS CHURCH PLANTING

From a global perspective, the United States is now the third-largest mission field in the world. With 80 percent of the population flooding our urban centers, and the world coming to our doorsteps, this makes our major cities some of the greatest mission fields on earth. Many of our rural communities are struggling, and even the heartland has become more secularized. The suburbs once known for their close-knit communities and block parties are being replaced by detached virtual communities. Meanwhile, the Church is in decline, and we are closing more churches than we're opening.

What does this mean? It means the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

For many, it seems that our nation has never been more divided, while at the same time natural disasters and tragedies are becoming more and more frequent. Confusion abounds as evil is called good and good called evil. One gets the sense that things are coming to an end, but if this is true, then we find ourselves in a great missionary age. It is the very era in which Christ again is calling His disciples to go plow the fields and plant the



seed of the Gospel in these dark and latter days, among a people who so desperately need it.

This is not for the faint of heart; it is a risky venture that takes great commitment and unity of mission. This means a healthy, harmonious family serving with joy. And now, more than ever, we need healthy mother congregations that are willing to daughter new congregations. LCMS Church Planting stands ready to walk alongside our districts in their efforts to reach new people in new places through new missions. The most effective way to reach the least and the lost is through establishing a Word and Sacrament ministry that serves the community through mercy. And we are called to bear witness even in the places where we are not — on the mean city streets, in dark alleys, outside country barns, inside boardrooms, on soccer fields.

Millions upon millions of people in the United States live apart from God, but the day of Christ's return is coming soon. So, what does this mean? The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. It's time to pick up the plow. It's time to plant.

WHAT IS MISSION FIELD: USA?

mis·sion field u·s·a

[mish-uhn feeld yoo-es-ey]

n. An LCMS Office of National Mission initiative to develop partnerships between struggling inner-city and rural congregations and healthy congregations that desire to help these ministries restart.

v. Planting Lutheran churches through mother congregations, sponsoring circuits or church-planting networks that need support to get their missions underway.

See also: A partnership between LCMS districts and the Office of National Mission to support churches and domestic missionaries as they bring the Gospel to dozens of downtrodden cities across the U.S. The initiative provides technical support with a *Witness, Mercy, Life Together*® framework for planting churches; community development through resources like Gospel Seeds and Lutheran Housing Support; a learning tool, currently in development, that seeks to provide the gift of vocation and paying jobs for those in need; grants that can serve as seed money for planting a *Mission Field: USA* church; and collaboration with missions in struggling communities that simply need support from healthy congregations that can pray, give and go (via mission trips) as the mission gets established.



STATS & FACTS

80%
OF THE U.S. POPULATION LIVES IN URBAN AREAS



65%
OF U.S. ADULTS SAY RELIGION IS NOT IMPORTANT IN THEIR LIVES



50%

OF MILLENNIALS BELIEVE IN GOD WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY





TECHNICAL/ FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- Christ Lutheran Church | **PERRY, GA.**
- Kairos Network, Northern Atlanta Circuit of the LCMS Florida-Georgia District | **ATLANTA, GA.**
- Outreach Kentucky, LCMS Indiana District | **RICHMOND, KY.**
- St. John Lutheran Church | **FRISCO, TEXAS**
- Church of All Nations Mission | **SCRANTON, PA.**
- Shepherd of the City Lutheran Church, Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries | **PHILADELPHIA, PA.**
- University of Toledo Campus Ministry, LCMS English District | **TOLEDO, OHIO**
- Christ Lutheran School | **PEORIA, ILL.**
- St. John's Lutheran Church | **BEARDSTOWN, ILL.**
- Ebenezer Lutheran Church | **COLUMBUS, OHIO**
- Faith Lutheran Church | **THOMPSON'S STATION, TENN.**
- Family of God in Christ Lutheran Church | **DETROIT, MICH.**
- The Wyneken Project Inc. | **BALTIMORE, MD.**
- Disaster-response church plant | **LUMBERTON, N.C.**
- Potential hybrid model for a national missionary | **OMAHA, NEB.**
- LCMS South Wisconsin District
- Emmaus Lutheran School | **INDIANAPOLIS, IND.**
- Shepherd of the City Lutheran Church | **FORT WAYNE, IND.**
- St. Paul Lutheran Church | **CHICAGO, ILL.**
- St. Paul Lutheran Church | **DALLAS, TEXAS**
- Incarnate Word Lutheran Church | **STONE MOUNTAIN, GA.**
- LCMS California-Nevada-Hawaii District, Replant and Planting Hmong Outreach
- LCMS Iowa District West, Coaching Follow-up to Churches Planting Churches
- Redeemer Lutheran Church | **HYATTSVILLE, MD.**
- Prince of Peace Lutheran Church | **CINCINNATI, OHIO**
- Lutheran Community Ministry | **ROCHESTER, N.Y.**
- LCMS Southeastern District
- LCMS Michigan District
- LCMS New England District



NATIONAL MISSIONARY

- El Calvario Lutheran Church, Church Planting Central, LCMS Texas District | **BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS**
- Lutheran Hope Center—Ferguson, LCMS Missouri District | **FERGUSON, MO.**
- St. Andrew Lutheran Church | **ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.**
- St. John's Lutheran Church/Ascension Lutheran Christian School | **GARY, IND.**
- University Lutheran Chapel, campus ministry at the University of Minnesota | **MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.**



CHURCH-PLANTING TRAINING

- LCMS Montana District | **BILLINGS, MONT.**
- Concordia Seminary | **ST. LOUIS, MO.**
- Concordia Theological Seminary | **FORT WAYNE, IND.**
- Confessional Lutheran Mission Society of Michigan | **DEWITT, MICH.**
- **WATERLOO, IOWA**
- **WICHITA, KAN.**

MISSION FIELD:

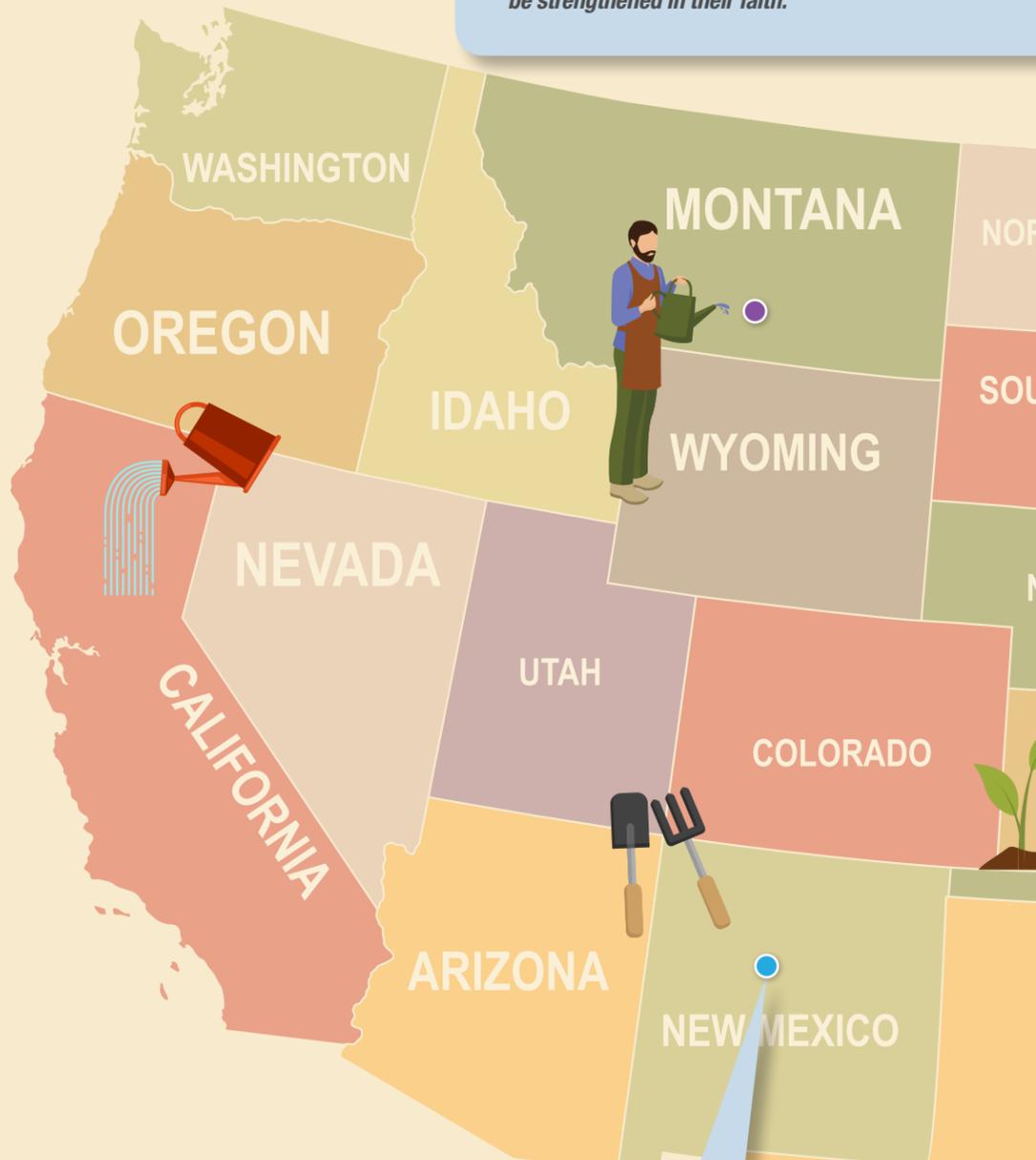


Mission Field: Minneapolis

NATIONAL MISSIONARY: REBECCA WAGNER

Wagner serves in campus ministry, where she focuses on outreach to Chinese and other international students. This involves inviting students to church and Bible study, building community and connecting them with other Christians.

“The students at the University of Minnesota need Mission Field: USA because they can then hear the Good News of Christ on the cross and be strengthened in their faith.”



Mission Field: Albuquerque

NATIONAL MISSIONARY: REV. ADAM DEGROOT

St. Andrew Lutheran Church is a multifaceted church plant with endless opportunities for mission work. The church currently has 17 people (seed families) who have been faithfully served by part-time pastors. With a national missionary now in place, the next step is to go through the process to become an official church of the LCMS, and ongoing support is needed for the mission to take this next step.

“The city of Albuquerque needs Mission Field: USA because there are no LCMS churches in our part of the city, the southwest quadrant, and those who live in that area need the Gospel, too.”



USA PILOT LOCATIONS



Mission Field: Ferguson NATIONAL MISSIONARY: REV. MICAH GLENN

Glenn arrived at the Ferguson Community Empowerment Center in July 2017 to serve as the executive director of the Lutheran Hope Center—Ferguson. Support is still needed to continue work, including developing a women's empowerment ministry and a children's reading program.

“The city of Ferguson needs Mission Field: USA because the people there are thirsty for the hope of the Gospel, and Mission Field: USA provides them a preacher.”



Mission Field: Gary NATIONAL MISSIONARY: REV. DELWYN CAMPBELL

Installed at St. John's Lutheran Church in Gary, Ind., on Jan. 8, 2017.

Campbell is engaged in building up the Lutheran fellowship and presence in the city, planting and launching a community-based Lutheran elementary school, and redeveloping a transitional housing ministry.

“The city of Gary needs Mission Field: USA because no other religious, social or political entity is able to articulate, teach and model a confessional Christian worldview the way an LCMS missionary, supported by local, district and Synod bodies, can.”



Mission Field: Brownsville NATIONAL MISSIONARY: REV. DR. ANTONIO LOPEZ

Lopez arrived in summer 2016 and serves El Calvario Lutheran Church, also working with RioMac, a group of several LCMS churches in the Rio Grande Valley. The missionary has organized home Bible studies, which have led to several Baptisms, new members and even a new church planter in training. This mission is not yet fully funded and is in need of approximately 80 percent more support.

“The city of Brownsville needs Mission Field: USA because the people of this community need the message of hope, forgiveness and new life that only Jesus Christ offers. In many ways, there is a spiritual darkness and hopelessness among many, [and] the Gospel message and ministry of Word and Sacraments changes lives in a dramatic way.”



Financial Support from Mission Field: USA:

The Greater Nashville Ethiopian Mekane Yesus ministry is growing and has moved into their own space within their community.

Technical Support from Mission Field: USA:

St. John Lutheran Church in Frisco, Texas, needed support in the chartering process.

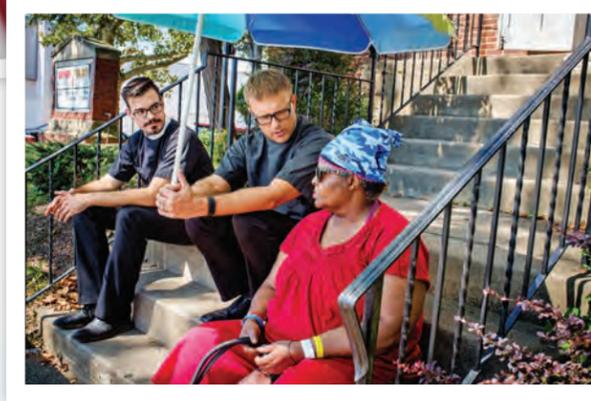
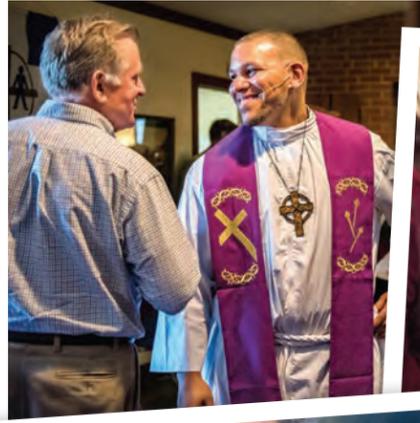


Ready to Plow?

MISSION FIELD: USA HAS A NEW ONLINE TOOL AVAILABLE at lcms.org/churchplanting to help congregations plant new churches. The resource consists of four one-hour video and audio training modules that visually and verbally lead the individual or congregation through all the material in the 2017 guidebook, *Mission Field: USA — A Resource for Church Planting*.

THE NEW TOOL IS:

- › Smart and simple;
- › Self-paced and quick to use;
- › Educational, providing helpful theological background for church planting;
- › Specific, with a step-by-step approach to chartering a new congregation; and
- › One-size-fits-all, but adaptable to any context.



THE MAKINGS OF A CHURCH PLANT

Throughout every stage, *Mission Field: USA* is available, praying for new church plants, coaching them through the process, assisting with the assessment and recruitment of missionaries and helping to obtain funding.

PRE-PLAN

Engage with the district and look at demographic studies

STAGE 1

(MONTHS 1–3)
Develop your life together

STAGE 2

(MONTHS 4–6)
Outreach through witness and mercy/incorporation and chartering

STAGE 3

(MONTHS 7–9)
Prepare for the charter service

STAGE 4

(FIRST YEAR AFTER CHARTERING)
Plant roots



GET IN TOUCH

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