

LCMS Gospel Seeds



Strong Faith, Fervent Love: Training Modern-Day Disciples

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s (LCMS) “Planting Gospel Seeds While Serving Human Needs” program helps congregations be better equipped to identify unmet or underserved needs in their communities in order to “win the right to be heard” and be more credible witnesses of the Gospel to their neighbors. The early Church (Acts 6:1-7) put into action its mission to serve both the needs of body and soul. Through the LCMS Gospel Seeds program, modern-day disciples of Jesus learn how to do what He taught His earliest followers: to demonstrate mercy by serving the needs of the body (Matt. 25:31-40).

The LCMS Gospel Seeds Program:

- A four-day training workshop that including agency and residential interviews
- Follow-up coaching
- A training manual
- Demographic studies
- Introductory presentation on Gospel Seeds

Revitalizing Churches Through Human Care

by Megan K. Mertz

Around the corner or across the street from every church in the U.S. is a family who needs to hear the Gospel. These families also may be looking for day care, job training, English-language classes, help preparing for citizenship and so on.

The “Planting Gospel Seeds While Serving Human Needs” process trains congregations to identify the most critical community challenges so that they can join hands with their neighbors and respond in tangible ways. In the process, closer relationships develop with neighbors, ultimately making new disciples for Christ.

Approximate number of Gospel Seeds consultations held each year: 10

Through a four-day training led by the Rev. Dr. Carlos Hernandez, director of LCMS Church and Community Engagement, congregation members are trained to conduct interviews with neighbors and local agencies to get to the heart of area problems. Over the years, Hernandez has discovered that one out of 10 of these residential “cold calls” will yield a prospective family that desires a follow-up call from the church.

When Hernandez came to Peace Lutheran Church, Decatur, Ga., only three teams went out into the neighborhood to visit with residents, yet these visits produced much fruit. Residents were eager to talk about ways to improve their



The Gospel Seeds program equips congregation members to go out into the community to connect with neighbors.

community, and some of them were interested in discussing spiritual issues as well.

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“Last year, [we gained] 12 new households and baptized nine,” said the Rev. Dr. Victor Belton, pastor of Peace, during a Gospel Seeds training. “We’ve grown exponentially, and Gospel Seeds is the reason.”

Peace has become a regional training center in the Atlanta area for the Gospel Seeds program, training other local congregations to successfully reach out to neighbors. Hernandez is working to establish these types of regional centers in other areas of the U.S. to revitalize LCMS churches and reverse trends in declining membership. By offering needed human-care ministries, churches can find ways to bring the saving message of Jesus Christ to the lost in their communities.

“We want our LCMS folks to get out of the church building and into the streets where the mission field is,” Hernandez explains.

Mercy Operations



Gospel Seeds



**Annual Investment:
\$20,500**

