

# COMMUNICATIONS AND PRAYER

REV. TROY TYSDAL

A common thread ties each of our Shared Ministries together—we exist to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

Lutheran Brethren Seminary (LBS) disciples students, equipping and training them in the Word of God. Those students, in turn will one day lead congregations to mature in faith and grow in unity toward the likeness of Jesus Christ. North American Mission (NAM) comes alongside CLB pastors and elders to resource them in making disciples in their congregations and among their neighbors—building community and partnering to plant new CLB congregations. Lutheran Brethren International Mission (LBIM) recruits, resources, and sends missionaries to some of the hardest to reach places on earth to disciple those who would never hear of the amazing love of Christ without their missionary presence.

Together, the Shared Ministries of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren connect people to Jesus, his community, and his mission. We are a disciple-making Church.

Over the past two years, under the leadership of President Paul Larson, the CLB Council of Directors, and the Mission Team, the Communication and Prayer department (CP) has had the privilege of helping develop and shape a five-year Mission Advancement Initiative (MAI). This MAI is built around four Senior Objectives—call, partner, unleash, and multiply.

The Senior Objectives don't change the mission of our ministries. LBS still trains pastors. NAM still partners with churches and plants new congregations. LBIM still sends missionaries. The Senior Objectives don't change the mission, but they challenge us to intentionally think

about how we pursue that mission with an eye on the future. Each department must ask themselves, "As we seek to fulfill our ministry, are we accomplishing the four Senior Objectives?" Are we calling people to follow Jesus? Are we facilitating and building partnerships with individuals, congregations, and regions? Are we unleashing—empowering and supporting—young men and women to lead in disciple making? Are we multiplying—planting new churches and seeing people come to faith in Jesus Christ? Are we making disciples who make disciples?

As well as working with each department on this vision, CP has been tasked with equipping directors and associates in the promotion of this initiative. We have developed MAI materials to help accomplish this effort, such as a logo, pamphlets, displays, PowerPoint, promotional videos, etc.

The logo, which also serves as the image and theme of this year's biennial convention, is designed to symbolize the death of Christ, his resurrection from the grave, and the birth of the Church. The focal point of the logo is the cross, where the light of the world was crucified for the sins of the world. The yellow background represents the sunrise of Easter morning, reminding us of the triumphant resurrection of our Lord. The crowd represents the birth of the Church—the coming and going of disciples being redeemed at the cross and sent out in mission from the cross. The thick border around the logo is made from two circular arrows illustrating the ongoing cycle of discipleship initiated by the sending of the Holy Spirit.

As the MAI impacts the Shared

Ministries of the CLB, it also impacts our Communication Department. *Faith & Fellowship* magazine continues to be our most visible communication tool—reaching over 6,700 homes every other month. In the past twelve issues, we have featured articles from over 70 authors. We've consistently provided updates on each of the Shared Ministries—introducing LBS graduates, church plants, and new international missionaries. We've celebrated the ordination of pastors and elders, as well as mourned the loss of faithful CLB servants who have passed on to glory. In our partnership with the Shared Ministries, the Senior Objectives of this new Mission Advancement Initiative—*Call, Partner, Unleash, and Multiply*—become a guiding principle for which we find, tell, and report stories. In the coming year, each of the four Senior Objectives will serve as a theme—helping to further unpack and embed this vision into our identity as we seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in this world.

In keeping with our MAI, issue #006 of *identity*, released in June 2022, features articles empowering young leaders to serve in their congregations and share their voices. It casts a vision for using one's gifts to reach the lost and addresses a Christian approach to war and politics. *identity* has a mailing list of 994 individuals—with another 928 copies sent directly to churches for distribution.

## LUTHERAN BRETHERN SEMINARY

Looking Back: On February 10, we completed our third **Giving Hearts Day** campaign in partnership with LBS. In 2020, we raised \$78,111. In 2021, we raised \$228,232. This year (2022), we



were blessed with \$251,801. Our focus entering the 2022 campaign was retention. We believed that we needed to retain 80% of the contributions from GHD 2021 to reach our 2022 goal. With that in mind, the CP department coordinated a series of three mailings informing past supporters of the upcoming GHD. The first mailing was a Christmas card to previous GHD supporters thanking them for their 2021 contribution. The second mailer reminded them of their 2021 support and asked them to consider a partnership in 2022. If the donor did not reply to either of those mailings, they received a third mailer the week before GHD. This effort led to 53% of our 2021 GHD donors returning, equaling an 83% retention in contributions.

Looking Forward: The CP department is currently working with LBS to develop an Alumni Club and newsletter. The club will seek to build relationships with LBS graduates. The newsletter will be released twice each year and feature an LBS faculty member covering a pressing theological issue facing the Church. This will serve as a resource for our pastors and keep them connected to our Seminary.

The CP department is in the process of developing two limited-run podcasts with Dr. Eugene Boe. The first podcast is designed to capture his approach to systematic theology. It will discuss the core values of the CLB and why they matter. The second podcast will look at the history of the CLB—tracing our heritage and providing a foundation for understanding who we are today.

## NORTH AMERICAN MISSION

Looking Back: Last November, we celebrated the Lord's faithfulness as

God provided \$161,601 in contributions during October toward our **Forge Ahead: Church Planting and Revitalization** campaign. This was a significant win for a department that brought in a total of \$147,587 in contributions during the entire 2020-21 fiscal year—and has big vision as part of our MAI to plant ten churches over the next five years and revitalize twenty-five existing CLB congregations. The CP department was instrumental in developing the vision for the Forge Ahead campaign, as well as displays, promotional materials, and coordinating videos for CLB congregations.

Looking Forward: The CP department is currently working on a series of video projects to highlight the work of NAM in church planting and revitalization—disciple-making efforts in our local CLB congregations. These videos will serve as promotional material for BC22 and be distributed to CLB congregations after the convention.

The CP department is planning our second Forge Ahead: Church Planting and Revitalization campaign for October 2022. This campaign will serve under the umbrella of our MAI and challenge our congregations to think about the lost in their communities, neighborhoods, and even their homes. It will invite them to partner with NAM as we seek to resource congregations in connecting people to Jesus, his community, and his mission.

## LUTHERAN BRETHREN INTERNATIONAL MISSION

Looking Back: During the summer of 2021, CP was instrumental in casting a vision and creating an LBIM recruitment campaign (internally) called **Just One**. The Just One campaign was put in motion

by LBIM last November. The campaign was a targeted effort in which CLB Ministers of the Gospel (MOG) were sent three copies of an LBIM case statement. The accompanying letter asked the MOG to keep one copy for themselves, to prayerfully consider giving a second copy to someone who might have the gifts for international mission, and the third copy to someone God has blessed with the ability to partner with LBIM financially. In addition, CP created a traveling display to accompany this campaign as Director Dan Venberg visits CLB congregations in the summer and fall of 2022.

Looking Forward: CP is currently working with LBIM to update pamphlets and develop a new website integrated with [www.CLBA.org](http://www.CLBA.org). The CP department designed and produced a 2022 LBIM calendar distributed to CLB congregations and MOGs last December. Complementing the calendar, we are currently coordinating videos from each of our CLB missionaries, providing a ministry update and greeting. This effort will continue through the 2022 calendar year.

I am blessed to serve as your Director of Communications and Prayer. I'm grateful for the wonderful team surrounding me. These are exciting times for the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, and I look forward to serving the Shared Ministries of the CLB as we seek to be more a Disciple-Making Church.

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