

See? **WOW!** News and Encouragement for CID Circuit **W**itness & **O**utreach **W**orkers

Nbr. 24 – June, 2020 (Pentecost)

“Welcome back” media kit from national Synod

The Office of National Mission has released a new resource to help congregations at the appropriate time to say, “We’re open again! Welcome!” You can find it at www.lcms.org/welcome-back

The kit includes customizable designs for banners (exterior and interior), posters, yard signs, postcards, social media shareables, and newspaper ads for your general community. All can help you draw the maximum attention to the re-start of church services and other activities that have recently languished in a sort of hibernation.

As you examine the items in this kit, think: Who has attended a baptism or confirmation, wedding or funeral, at your church over the last year? These are, at least in many cases, people who need to know when you open up again.

Maybe not today or tomorrow, but the time will come to utilize the resources in the new media kit. Congregations can start familiarizing themselves with the kit’s contents, and laying plans to make wise use of the resources it contains.

Other “re-opening” ideas

1. Re-opening can be a sort of “do-over” for churches, an opportunity to re-do things that perhaps had not been done so well in the past. What new things have you started in the past 10 weeks that you will continue in some way? And what had you been doing prior to COVID-19 that now does not seem to rate quite the previous investment of time and energy?
2. Some people (both church members and unchurched folks) are facing major financial challenges. Consider offering the Dave Ramsey “Financial Peace University” instruction, using the Synod’s accompanying guide. Find the latter at <https://www.lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/stewardship-ministry>

3. Social media will probably turn out to be key in letting people know when your church holds services and other events again. If no one is currently spearheading social media outreach for your congregation, appoint someone!
4. Consider ways in which your electronic efforts will complement your in-person services and classes, not conflict with them. For example, utilize the “Pass This On” scripts that CID office will send to all congregations for six months starting June 1. (See the last *See? WOW!* issue for more information on this.) These messages will be designed to direct people, particularly the unchurched, toward your next service.
5. Think about ways to keep as actively engaged team members the “tech” people who lately have been helping you to put church services online, send e-mail to all your members, etc.
6. Think of those who, in the past couple of months, have encountered your church for the first time online. In all probability, there are such folks! How can you find out who they are? (This may be as simple as your asking them to contact you in some way.) What sort of “follow up” steps can you take with them?

Two notes for C-WOWs:

- Zoom meeting for C-WOWs? I received only one response regarding this prospect. I know you are all quite busy, and summer will only make scheduling more difficult. Maybe this is an idea whose time has not yet come.
- This newsletter typically does not appear during summer. If there is news to share this July or August, look for an issue. If not, the Lord be with you during the summer!

Worth Considering –

In the early 20th century, the scientist Ernst Rutherford said, “Don’t let me catch anyone talking about the Universe in my laboratory.” He meant that working hours in his lab were to be neither the



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time nor the place for grand theorizing about the universe.

On Pentecost, which is sometimes considered the church's birthday, it might well be said: "No one should be talking about God in the church" – in the sense that the church is nowhere for speculations and theorizing about God.

We should never content ourselves with talking about some generic God who appears as a great cosmic oblong blur out there. Nor should we talk about God in terms familiar to this world, as One Who draws near to people not by promise but with demand — not by what *He* does but by what *we* do. We should not wax on and on about the Holy Spirit when the Holy Spirit's work is to point to Christ.

Let no one catch the church talking or thinking about God except in light of what Scripture says about His presence, His promise, and His pardon.

God's presence: Don't let anyone catch you saying or thinking: "I'm just a nondescript blob on an insignificant planet tucked away in a corner of space." Think of God's presence in Christ. Sinners though you and I are, the One whom heaven and earth cannot contain came to be our Brother. "Destroy this temple," He said, "and in three days I will raise it up." He wasn't talking about a building. He was speaking of himself. (See John 2:19–22.)

God's promise: Don't let anyone catch you thinking, "There's nothing much worth dying for in this world, let alone living for." Recall God's promise in Christ, which took Him to and through the jaws of death. See what commitment He showed to you and your salvation. He keeps His promises.

God's pardon: Don't let anyone catch you thinking, "I've messed up too badly. I might as well give up." Receive God's pardon in the Christ Who died for you. His forgiveness covers all your sin.

Consider, too, how God's presence, promise, and pardon also apply to the church as a gathering of saints around God's Word.

God's presence: Let no one catch us thinking that the church doesn't amount to much because our building is rather modest and the people who meet there may appear quite ordinary. Think of God's presence in Christ. We are stones made alive by Him in Baptism, built together on Him, THE living stone, to be a spiritual house. Our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God in Christ. (See 1 Peter 2:4-5.)

God's promise: Let no one catch us thinking that the church does not seem to have much of a future because its members aren't all that impressive or "slick." Recall God's promise to give His people a future and a hope. (See Jeremiah 29:11). That is what He has given us in Christ.

God's pardon: Let no one catch us thinking that the church is infested with sinners, which makes it an undesirable setting. Well, the church is chocked-full of sinners, all right. It has no other sort of members! Yet: "In this Christian church [the Holy Spirit] daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day he will raise up me and all the dead and will give eternal life to me and to all believers in Christ."

See? **WOW!** God's presence, promise, and pardon in Christ are in His church. To bring these gifts to others, we bring these others into the church too. -- Ken Schurb kschurb@cidlcms.org



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