

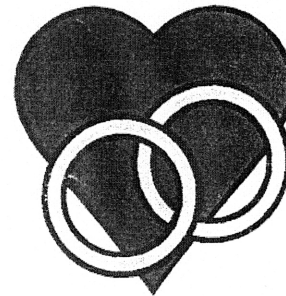
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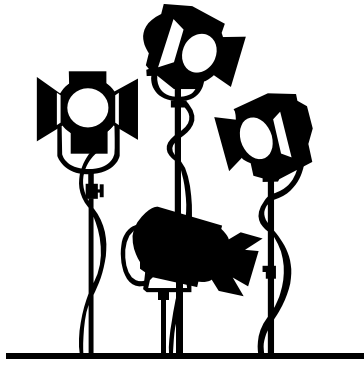
Plan **NOW** to come to Cleveland, Ohio for fun on the "North Coast"
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Co-Coordinator:

George & Pat Deveny 440-953-0076

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SPOTLIGHT on National Capital Area

From the beginning of the area in 1979, we have always had close ties with the leadership in both the ELCA and LCMS. This has proven to be most beneficial in getting couples to attend weekends. The support of the church gives LME an unquestioned credibility, which keeps us in the mainstream of the ministries of the church.

“THE SECRET TO FULL WEEKENDS”

*Lovingly submitted by
NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA*

Greetings from the East! We're Tom & Ina Berkey from the National Capital Area of District I. Our area encompasses a large geographic area. It covers all of Maryland and Virginia, a portion of Delaware and also the District of Columbia. It includes 3 major metropolitan areas (Washington D.C., Baltimore, and the Hampton Roads area of Virginia) each with a population of well over a million people. Yet, the Lutheran population, especially in Virginia is in the rural areas often in very small churches. It includes churches from three different Synods of the ELCA as well as a portion of the Southeast District of the Missouri Synod and churches from the Wisconsin Synod. It has always been a challenge to fill weekends when so many jurisdictions are involved.



Ina & Tom Berkey

Our style of leadership has been to lay out longer-range goals and plans rather than just concentrating on "the next weekend." Recently we developed a Two-year plan. This plan gives tangible goals against which we can measure our progress. We have chosen to concentrate on the following goals:

- **Creating a demand for the ME weekend**
- **Creating a supply of qualified presenting couples**
- **Establishing more Spirals/Community Events**

All three goals are equally important, but in this article we will discuss more about "creating a demand" because we have been asked to share especially about the idea of filling weekends.

CREATING A DEMAND

A key part of increasing demand was to expand the geographic area where weekends are held. These now include Northern Virginia, Central Maryland, Baltimore and our newest area of Southeastern Virginia centered in Norfolk but called the Hampton Roads area by the locals.

A two-fold approach has been taken to creating a demand:

1. From the top down: We have met with Bishops (ELCA) of the three synods to inform them and to gain their support and expect to do the same with LCMS Presidents and Circuit Counselors. We have scheduled visits to Conferences/Circuits to tell the LME story and ask for support. By starting with the Bishops/Presidents, we are not making an end run around the leadership and we gain their support. The real work is done by attending meetings of the ELCA conferences and LCMS circuits. Typically these meetings are held monthly and are attended by most all of the

National Capital Area, continued...

pastors. The pastors share ideas of what is available and has been working. Getting on the agenda of one of these meetings each year allows LME to present its program and to get across the message that we are here to help the pastors in the family life portion of their overall ministry.

2. From the bottom up: The most important key here is the scheduling of Information or Inviting Talks in local congregations. Another key is initiating having a Congregational Contact Couple in as many churches as possible where encountered couples assist in getting the publicity (posters, bulletin inserts, newsletter articles, etc.) in their local parish.

We have also had displays and physical presence at Synod Assemblies, Area Workshops and other venues. This supports both approaches because the leadership sees as an ongoing program not a one shot flash and the pastors can talk to us directly and have us schedule someone to go into their congregation for a presentation. This approach has led to a heightened awareness that LME has a most important link with our local churches.

As a way of illustrating how this has worked in the newest development in the National Capital Area, let us look to the Hampton Roads Area of Southeastern Virginia. It is a very historic area that includes Williamsburg and Yorktown as well as Norfolk and Virginia Beach. The term "roads" comes from the British during colonial times and refers to an intersection of several waterways and rivers.

Several years ago, Jim and June Harvey moved to this area from Northern Virginia. Not knowing anyone, it was difficult to know where to begin planning a weekend. First they joined a congregation and got acquainted with other Lutheran churches in the area. Next, a Lutheran spiral (or love circle!) which had formed from Episcopal weekends in the area, invited them in and soon plans were made to offer a local weekend where couples previously had to drive 4 to 7 hours to attend Lutheran weekends in the DC or Baltimore areas.

The plans set in place have proven very successful. For two years now, full weekends with waiting lists have been the result. The timeline that has been followed is included for all to consider as appropriate.

1. 5 to 6 months before the weekend, contact was made with the Bishop's office to discuss LME and the planned date of the weekend. Assistance was requested to get the word out to as

many Pastors and congregations as possible. This allowed the Assistant to the Bishop for Hampton Roads to be fully informed and thus able to verbally support this "joint" ministry in any discussions with Pastors or Congregational leaders.

2. 4 to 5 months before the weekend contact was made with the Conference Deans to get on the agenda to speak at the next monthly meeting. At these meetings one of the important things to mention is that there are couples in the LME community that will come to their church to give temple talks about LME at all of their services. Immediately following these contacts, a letter from Area Contact Couple was sent to all churches informing them of the date and place of the next weekend and that the pastors would be getting a call from a representative of LME.

3. Beginning 4 months before the weekend each pastor was visited or called to share information about LME. Personal visits are the best, but calls work well if done very soon after seeing them at a conference meeting. Encourage each pastor to schedule a Temple Talk in the church and offer to talk at Adult Sunday School. Sometimes the Pastor would give LME the whole Sunday School time, but more typically LME would be given about 10 minutes. Let the pastor know a couple will be at his/her church all morning and will hand out brochures after each worship.

4. Also 4 months before weekend get a commitment from three to four area couples to devote several Sundays to giving Temple Talks and/or spending time in Sunday School classes. The Sunday School class could involve having just 10-15 minutes to talk about Marriage Encounter all the way to having the entire time to teach a class on marriage from a biblical perspective. Guidelines for a two to three minute Temple Talk, as well as ideas for various ways to approach the Sunday School class depending on the time allocation, can be provided by contacting Jim & June Harvey.

5. From 3 months to the month before the weekend touch base with pastors to make certain there are announcements in Sunday bulletins and monthly newsletters. Remind pastors to make certain that the announcement is in the bulletin about LME especially on the Sunday when there is an LME couple visiting their church.



Front Row: Jim & Kim Granger, Jim & June Harvey, Alan & Arlene Fraser, PCC, Mike & Nancy Handzo, Joe & Nancy Urban. Back Row (clockwise): Susan & David Griffith, Janeen & George Wadzita, Tom & Ina Berkey, ACC. Area presenting couples not pictured: June & Jake Rabatin, Bill & Lyn Landik, Ruth & Don Williams.

6. Following each visit to a church, send a thanks note to the Pastor. Following the weekend, send a letter or make a personal visit to the Bishop's office to tell about the success of the weekend, including the existence of a waiting list and thank them for their support including telling them of the graciousness of their Pastors.

Future Demand: Looking towards the future of our area, the interaction with Pastors has led to the discovery that it is far easier for them to support a push for one weekend a year than for several. Also community couples can work for one weekend with more enthusiasm than for every weekend. The Area Board recently approved creating a "zone" for each weekend in the Area. The push will be made for the once a year "local" weekend. Dates of other "nearby" weekends will be included. We have a different weekend coordinator for each of the four weekends held in the area. In effect, they act similar to the contact couple for that weekend and the contact for the churches in that portion of the larger Area. This has the added benefit of allowing us as Area Lay Contact Couple to have more time to visit with church leadership and areawide issues and strategy while the weekend coordinators concentrate on the individual churches near each weekend.

CREATING A SUPPLY OF PRESENTING COUPLES

One of the strengths of the National Capital Area has

always been a substantial and close knit group of presenting couples. Over the years some presenters have moved to other areas, one even moved back after an absence of many years. All have provided essential support in the community and not just as presenters. At the present moment we have nine couples written and week-end ready with several more in the pipeline (attending Deepers). We continue to offer the possibility to eligible couples on each weekend. A critical need is for Clergy Present-

ing Couples. The death of Fred Illick left a very deep hole in our community – we miss Marilyn and his enthusiasm, their Christian witness and their unflagging zeal for LME. The other Clergy Couple from the Area is in the Navy and has moved to Chicago after helping to organize and present the initial weekend in Hampton Roads. At the moment we have no clergy couples writing.

ESTABLISHING MORE Spirals /Community Events

We have tried to establish more Spirals, knowing that involvement in community is a key to continuing the journey of LME. We find this a difficult task as we compete for time and commitment from those who have more than a few noble causes vying for their energy.

Recently at the ending of weekends we have tried to organize new Spirals from the couples on the weekend. On the first weekend this approach was tried, we got 3 new Spirals started. The next time that this was tried, we had a different result, but we will probably end up with one new Spiral and the strengthening of 2 existing Spirals.

We take courage from the knowledge that we are required to plant the seeds, God gives the growth in God's own time. We pray without ceasing and keep on planting the seeds, praying that God will grant the growth, full measure pressed down and running over.

To God be the Glory!



David and Teresa Ferguson
Keynote Presenters



Kari and Anna
Alander

