

Lutheran Marriage Encounter Report

ROSTERS:

(NAR Leadership/Staff Roster Attached)

WEEKENDS HELD: *(January-June, 2017)*

<u>Dates</u>	<u>City/State</u>	<u>Facility</u>	<u># couples</u>	<u>#Lutheran Individuals</u>	<u>#Lutheran Clergy</u>	<u># Presenting Cpls (+ F.E., if not Luth)</u>
<u>District 1:</u>						
Mar 3-5, '17	Myrtle Beach SC	Clarion	9	6	0	3
Mar 10-12, '17	Birch Run MI	Comfort Inn	16	16	1	
Mar 24-26, '17	State College PA	Toftrees Golf	12	16	2	
Apr 28-30, '17	Beachwood OH	Fairfield Inn	13	14	1	3 + Interpreters for deaf (BME)
Apr 28-30, '17	Lancaster PA	Heritage Hotel	11	12	0	
<u>District 2:</u>						
Apr 21-23, '17	Dallas, TX	Wyndham	11	4	0	3
Apr 28-30, '17	Dittmer, MO	Soujourn Rtrt.	4	2	4	3
<u>District 3:</u>						
Feb 3-5, '17	Lincoln, NE	Hol Inn Exp.	11	12	0	4
Feb 17-19, '17	Brooklyn Ctr, MN	Double Tree	15	25	0	4
April 28-30, '17	Brooklyn Ctr, MN	Double Tree	18	19	0	4
<u>District 4:</u>						
Feb 17-19, '17	CO Springs, CO	Glen Eyrie	12	4	0	3 (incl UME & Non-Denom)

Total 132 couples encountered January-June, 2017

WEEKENDS SCHEDULED: *(Included is general states/provinces information for each District for easier identification/connection with other Faith Expressions)*

District 1 (Eastern Time Zone US and Ontario and Quebec, CA):

<u>Dates</u>	<u>City/State</u>	<u>Facility</u>	<u>Additional Information</u>
Sept 15-17, '17	Canadensis PA (N.E.)	Spruce Lake Retreat	
Sept 29-Oct 1, '17	Battle Creek MI (N.W.)	Quality Inn	\$79/nt room rate
Oct 6-8, '17	Lee MA (N.E.)	Black Swan Inn	
Oct 13-15, '17	Jacksonville FL (South)		contract signed
Nov 3-5, '17	Millersburg OH (Cent)	Hotel Millersburg	Another pay-your-own
Spring '18	Birch Run MI (N.W.)		Contract pending
Spring '18	Western Ontario tbd (N.W.)		tbd
Mar 2-4, '18	Myrtle Beach SC (South)		considering pay-your-own
April '18	Beachwood OH (Cent)	Fairfield Inn	most likely site

District 2 (TX, OK, LA, MS, AL, AR, TN, KY, IN, IL, MO, KS):

Oct 13-15, '17	Peoria, IL (Central IL)	Quality Inn and Suites
Nov 10-12, '17	South Beloit, IL (N IL)	Garden Hotel
Nov 3-5, '17	Dittmer, MO (St. Louis)	Sojourn Retreat Center
Aug 4-6, '17	Dallas, Texas (Dallas)	Wyndham Dallas Suites Park Central
Nov 3-5, '17	Richardson, Texas (Dallas)	Spring Hill Retreat Center

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District 3 (ND, SD, NE, IA, MN, WI, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, CA):

Oct 13-15, '17	St. Cloud, MN	Holiday Inn	New Area
Nov 3-5, '17	Sioux Falls, SD	Quality Inn and Suites	
Feb, 2018	Kansas (city TBD)		Outreach Weekend
Feb 16-18, '18	Brooklyn Center, MN	Double Tree Hilton	
Apr 20-22, '18	New Ulm, MN		New Area
Oct 12-14, '18	Spicer, MN.	Green Lake Retreat Center	

District 4 (NM, AZ, CA, OR, WA, ID, MT, WY, UT, NV, CO, AK, HI):

Jul 14-16, '17	Ten Sleep, WY	Circle J	RV WE (CPO w/UME)
Fall, 2017	Phoenix, AZ	TBD	
Oct 13-15, '17	Rancho Cordova, CA	Holiday Inn	
Oct 20-22, '17	CO Springs, CO	Glen Eyrie	CPO WE with UME
Nov, 2017	Seattle, WA	TBD	

PRESENTING COUPLE STRENGTH:

District 1

	Clergy	3 rd Set	2 nd Set	1 st Set	LOA	#Not CPO Ready
Central	1	2	1 +1W	0	0	0
Northeast	3	1	2 +1 W	0	0	0
Northwest	2	1 +1 W	1+ 3 W			0
Southern	1	1	1 (part-time)	0	0	0
<i>Totals</i>	7	5 (+1W)	4 (+5W)	0		

District 2

Central Ill	0	1	1	0	0	0
Northern ILL	1	0	0	0	0	0
St. Louis area	4	1	2	0	?	0
Dallas/Ft. Worth	1	1	2	0	0	0
Houston/San Antonio	1	0	0	1 W		
<i>Totals</i>	3	2	2	1W		

District 3

	Clergy	3 rd Set	2 nd Set	1 st Set	LOA	
MN/WI	1	1	2	3	1 clergy	2
NEB/NW Iowa/SD	1	1	2	1	0	2
<i>Totals</i>	2	2	3	5		

District 4

	Clergy	3 rd Set	2 nd Set	1 st Set	LOA	
Arizona/NM	0	1	0	0		
Mid Rockies	1	1	0	0	0	0
N. Cal/N. Nev.	1	1	0	1	0	
Wash./Oregon	W-1	2	0	1 W		
<i>Totals</i>	2 +1W	5	0	1 + 1W		
LME NAR total	14 +1W	14 +1W	9 +5W	7 +2W		Total = 44 plus writers

ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS/PROJECTS/BEST PRACTICES:

- See Attached NAR Initiatives Summary

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- Pilots: Utilizing a combined spiral bound Workbook/Notebook; Self/Feelings swap (very well received-order makes more sense, timing works, latecomers can take inventory on own and don't miss the foundation of the Encounter Experience: feelings); providing a rough schedule of the Encounter (starting times only) for couples who request it (as a timeless experience is proving to be a distraction to an increasing number of couples); more efforts in personally surveying participants Post-Encounter.

INVITING/RECRUITING/PUBLICITY BEING DONE:

- Participation in Best Practices for Ministry Conference (AZ and IN). This is a conference attended by 2000+ forward thinking, missional church leaders throughout the country. (Dozens of interested pastoral couples shared their contact info for follow-up).
- Inviting/Publicity services offered by our Media Specialists include church mailings, website, and social media.
- Partnering with other Faith Expressions to publicize and hold Encounters.
- Local Area/District Efforts: church mailings; romantic dinners; inclusion of Pre-Encountered couples in Post-Encounter activities; 'temple talks;' posters in grocery stores, libraries, bookstores, etc.; LME booths at pastors' conferences.

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO ENGAGE/SUPPORT THE NEWLY ENCOUNTERED:

- Ministry Initiatives to provide personal connection, post-encounter activities, and to encourage commitment to ministry. (See NAR Initiatives Summary Attachment).
- NAR-wide Eblasts are emailed (to all encountered couples). They include a short video clip (can be used as a couple or in a Journey Group or other community activity), a sharing question, dialogue questions, and notices of upcoming events, ways to get involved, etc.
- Local Newsletters (vast majority are electronic) to keep folks connected, advertise community events, etc.
- A variety of Post-Encounter activities for couples and families along with Journey Groups continue to be offered throughout North America. Events offered include: enrichment workshops, cheese/wine-tasting events, camping events, picnics, holiday gatherings, Romantic Weekends/Renewals/Reunions, World Marriage Day celebrations, movie/date nights, Family Fun Days with picnic and hiking, and Road Rallies, Encounter Wrap-Up Gatherings.
- Many Areas are utilizing "Sharing Our Gifts" inventories to solicit involvement based on the couples' interests.
- Facebook Groups/Facebook Live presentations

CPO ACTIVITIES:

District 1 (Eastern Time Zone US and Ontario and Quebec, CA):

Central Area explored a lead to share a Weekend with the Mennonite-Brethren Expression in May in Ohio, but that fizzled. Personally, Fells are workshopping the Baptist Clergy, and our team stands ready to share an Encounter, and has a meeting with the state-leaders for WWME in June.

N.E. Area includes one UCC couple in CT as a presenter.

N.W. reconnected with the WWME expression locally, who joined in the Christmas activity and some Journey Group get-togethers.

District 2 (TX, OK, LA, MS, AL, AR, TN, KY, IN, IL, MO, KS):

Rockford contacted local Methodist ME leadership who were interested in advertising to their community (though they are not holding Encounters).

The Dallas Area Methodist spiral keeps us informed of their meetings and those of us that can make it attend. They are also kept apprised of our Journey Meetings and attend when they can.

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Williams have attended Catholic Sectional meetings and have given their presentation on the four generation groups at a couple of Catholic leadership meetings. Interaction with the Catholic Community continues to be a source of resources, networking, and ideas.

District 3 (ND, SD, NE, IA, MN, WI, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, CA):

Methodist and Lutheran couples share in presenters/board meetings and assist each other as prayer couples. Several SDA couples prayer coupled and attended sing-off

District 4 (NM, AZ, CA, OR, WA, ID, MT, WY, UT, NV, CO, AK, HI):

CO: All Encounters, Journey Groups, meetings, etc. have been integrated with the UME group. Other Faith Expressions are welcomed.

WA: Catholic community is only other local Faith Expression they know of in Washington and Oregon at this time. Response to contacts has been minimal.

VARIETY OF MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCES:

District 1: Central Area offers to Encounter attendees and in print to churches, that we are willing to take the Encounter to locations outside N.E. Ohio, including non-residential Encounters, but haven't found any "takers" for 2 years. A 7-week 3RE Encountered has been offered to a church - they are considering it, after declining to host one last year.

N.W. Area is discussing the possibility of holding a non-residential Encounter in the future.

Southern Area is considering a pay-your-own for this coming October.

District 2: St. Louis is planning to possibly hold a clergy-only weekend at the Seminary.

Combined traditional and non-residential Encounter in D/FW in November at a small retreat center. Only 12 rooms are available but adequate space is available for presentations. This will allow us to offer rooms for those coming from a distance, while offering a non-residential opportunity for local couples. This will hopefully reduce cost and make the Weekend available to some who would not otherwise consider attending. D/FW will offer a Community Overnight Retreat for Encountered couples. The retreat will be held at the facility our November Weekend is scheduled for as a familiarization and dry run effort to work out the kinks before the Weekend.

District 4: Second RV Encounter is scheduled in Ten Sleep, WY on July 14-16, 2016. UME community they are partnering with is leading the way in hosting a 3RE Encounter in Thermopolis, WY this fall.

UPDATES TO SHARE:

We have been offered an opportunity to outreach LME to India through connections with Lutheran pastors attending seminary in St. Louis, MO. The information concerning need and a proposal to move forward has just been received and will be taken to our North American and European Boards for consideration. The need for marriage education and support there is great and the cost will be significant. Your prayers are most appreciated.

STRENGTHS:

- Openness to new ideas; willingness to pilot those with merit (while preserving core ministry strengths)
- Experienced, supportive leadership at all levels
- Dedicated volunteers
- Up-to-date, professional Inviting & Publicity/Media web and social media presence with common 'branding'
- Church and encountered couples databases continuing expansions

SUCSESSES:

- Self-Pay Weekends

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- 78 couples (+ 1 widow and 1 widower) registered for the 2017 International LME Reunion
- Increasing social media presence (FB, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) including listing all LME Encounters on Facebook as Events and private Facebook groups (post-Encounter, District, Leaders)
- Virtual meetings at the NAR and District levels to stay in touch while decreasing meeting costs

CHALLENGES:

- Effective Inviting/Recruiting/Encounter Attendance
- Post-Encounter involvement / lack of greater community support
- Raising up new/younger leadership couples
- Dwindling number of Encounter Presenters
- Geographical distances
- Moving from a mentality of ministry survival to a mentality of ministry THRIVING!

FAITH EXPRESSION PRAYER CONCERNS:

- That God be honored in everything we do, say, and try
- Ministry leaders and volunteers – commitment, motivation, health, aging leadership, younger couple involvement
- Churches to promote and support the ministry
- Outreach & pilot Encounters
- Increased Encounter attendance
- Outreach to India

WHAT TYPE OF HELP/IDEAS DO WE DESIRE FROM THE INTERFAITH BOARD?

- Ideas to increase post-Weekend involvement – all ages; especially younger couples
- Programs to develop new, younger leaders
- Ideas to increase Encounter attendance

IDEAS TO CONSIDER AT THE NEXT FOUNDATION MEETING:

- Advertising blitz – radio, television, internet
- No Success without Successor and/or other personal leadership development opportunities
- Post-Weekend Surveys via Mail Chimp or Survey Monkey

FINANCIALS/STATISTICS:

- Significant reductions in overhead and meeting costs along with an increase in Post-Encounter donations has kept us financially viable.
- *Awaiting January-June, 2017 financials and statistics. Will forward separately when received.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen & Susan Rufe and Ed & Emily Kast