

# LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER DISTRICT REPORT

## ROSTERS:

*Please attach current rosters.*

## WEEKENDS SCHEDULED: *(By Area within your District)*

<u>Dates</u>	<u>City/State</u>	<u>Facility</u>	<u>Additional Information</u>
Feb 16-18, 2018	Brooklyn Center, MN	Double Tree Inn	
Feb 23-25, 2018	Grand Island, NE	Fairfield Inn & Suites	
April 6-8, 2018	St. Cloud, MN	Holiday Inn	New location
August 10-12, 2018	Omaha, NE	Hampton Inn	
October 10-12, 2018	Minnesota		location to be determined

## 5 POINT-GOLD STAR THRUST TO THRIVE UPDATES:

*What are you doing/planning in your District/Areas to thrive in the following 5 areas. Include personal, couple, Area, and District endeavors.*

### Prayer: *Include specific prayer plans/activities/other.*

*District prayer partners were assigned at the District meeting in September with encouragement to continue to pray for one another throughout the coming year. This included suggestions for notes in the mail, emails, sharing letters on weekends, etc. NE/KS/IA is interested in starting a prayer chain but haven't yet figured out how to get it going. Emphasis for both areas is placed on all meetings, spirals, events and activities to include devotions and prayer.*

*In Minnesota there is a Pre-Weekend Prayer Vigil where couples are given the first names and cities of all the couples scheduled to attend the upcoming weekend prior to the start of the weekend and prayer for them and their attendance, commitment and openness to the MEE.*

### Personal Development: *What kinds of things are you doing/planning/do you recommend we incorporate in order to thrive in leadership in LME and in life?*

*In Nebraska area, one presenting couple leads 2 spiral groups. Another leads a small group/study at their church unrelated to ME but with openness to inviting and attending to a LME event. Many couples are involved in personal enrichment Bible studies and small groups.*

*In Minnesota, presenters are involved in Love Circles, maintain creative, entrepreneurial leadership styles, having recently become involved in using Thrivent Action dollars to promote media opportunities. As a Team Community, presenters are supportive of one another, assisting with Loving Tasks, sending emails, offering help with personal life issues, and continual hugs.*

### Pre-Encounter Excellence: *Include inviting/recruiting/publicity/Pre-Encounter Contacts, etc.*

*Nebraska has been busy sending out letters to churches just prior to or following the eblast to encourage them to open the email from LME and to forward to the media person in the church. Plans are also being made to eblast previously encountered couples.*

*Minnesota has been placing a lot of emphasis on the use of social media for inviting and publicity. Facebook and Twitter are being utilized for inviting, sharing and publicity. Our publicity couple reports that Church email was sent out to 530 addresses using the Refresh, re-energize, reconnect theme, along with dates for weekends, Facebook contact information, the godlovesmarriag website and our publicity couples' email address if brochures are wanted. They also launched a "Appreciated your Spouse" meme series last week on Facebook/Twitter (this is a series of thank you notes spouses could use with each other). 6 couples have recently signed up for the February weekend off the Facebook/Twitter pages.*

### Encounter Excellence: *(The Focus of this Meeting) What are you doing /planning to insure excellence in the Encounter Experience?*

*Nebraska's future plans include sending out a post weekend survey for review at future presenter meetings. Special care and attention to be given to meals that are delicious and edible to those who have food allergies and special needs. They are also excited to be using the new table questions.*

*In Minnesota, our Publicity Couple, plans to soon launch a 52-week meme series on Twitter/Facebook on the theme "Connection Builder" (tips on how to maintain emotional connection with your spouse).*

**Post-Encounter Excellence: What is being done/planned to engage/support the newly encountered?**

*In Nebraska every presenter contacts the couples within the first 4 weeks or so, inviting them to the Weekend Renewal and encouraging them to continue to dialogue. A virtual newsletter is sent to all encountered, with LME news, upcoming events, and a dialogue question. New spiral groups are created, or couples are invited into existing ones. Recently encountered couples are contacted about becoming prayer couples. Sign-up sheets are given to each couple about loving tasks they can perform.*

*Minnesota is excited about a new Love Circle starting in the St. Cloud area.*

**ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS/PROJECTS/BEST PRACTICES:**

*Include things you are piloting or plan to pilot. If tried, please include observations/results.*

*The new table questions were piloted by Nebraska for their Sioux Falls weekend last Fall and will be used again in Feb. 2018. The Methodists piloted the 3RE in Nebraska and have been sharing information with LME.*

*Minnesota is looking forward to using the new Table Questions at the February weekend. They are also planning to use the Weekend Schedule and the Prayer Box.*

**CPO ACTIVITIES:**

*In what ways are you connecting with other WWME Faith Expressions?*

*Nebraska has been using prayer couples from the South Dakota area and United Methodist community. Also, some Lutheran couples were prayer couples for the Methodist 3RE.*

*While Minnesota does not have another faith expression, we are finding by using more social media connections we are connecting with more couples from other faith expressions desiring attendance at our weekends. On our upcoming Feb weekend there is an anniversary couple who attended a Catholic weekend years ago. He is Catholic, and she is not. He requested to attend Mass on Sunday and will be attending an early morning service prior to Sunday breakfast so as not to miss the rest of the Weekend.*

**VARIETY OF MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCES:**

*If you're holding or considering anything other than the traditional Weekend, please include here.*

*Preliminary talks have begun to try another "non-weekend", possibly in June 2019 in Minnesota.*

**UPDATES TO SHARE:**

**STRENGTHS AND HOW WE APPLIED THEM:**

*New ALC in Nebraska who has a passion for LME. They were sent to the NAR meeting in NY and returned with enthusiasm and eagerness to try new ideas.*

*The size of our Presenting Couple Community in Minnesota and our enthusiasm is a strength*

**WEAKNESSES AND HOW WE ADDRESSED THEM:**

*Nebraska has lost a presenting couple recently to a LOA but will stay in touch with them with prayers and encouragement. This couple has also been our district secretary for many years. Nebraska is excited to have a newly written first set couple and a KS 1<sup>st</sup> set couple with both of them scheduled for weekends in 2018.*

**SUCSESSES / PROBLEMS SOLVED / OBSTACLES OVERCOME:**

*Nebraska is appreciative and thankful for at least one presenting couple in each set for their area. They had a reunion in NE Iowa that was well attended, full of love and excitement. New contact information was obtained for encountered couples that had been "lost" over the years.*

*In Minnesota we are working to meet the couples in the present culture which is more media based. Couples are more tuned into what is going on "on line" and not as many "faith based." Our connection to them is different. Also, their lives are different, so their commitment is different. We are working to engage*

*them in a different way-the media. We are hopeful the meme series and the LME web information will lead them to a MEE. We are excited to think that this process has led to 6 of the 16 couples presently registered for the Feb. weekend to attend.*

**CHALLENGES WE FACE / PROBLEMS THAT NEED SOLVING:**

- *Communicating with and engaging Community couples to help in inviting couples.*
- *Spiral groups (Love Circles) in areas where couples are spread out*
- *Getting newly encountered couples involved and willing to help on a weekend*
- *Getting Encountered Couples to be involved in Post Event Activities*
- *In Minnesota, the continued rise on costs of hotels*
- *Encouraging couples to become presenters*